



NAVY NEWS

OCTOBER 2012

CLASS ACTS

**IMPRESSIVE
DEBUTS FROM
AMBUSH AND
DUNCAN**

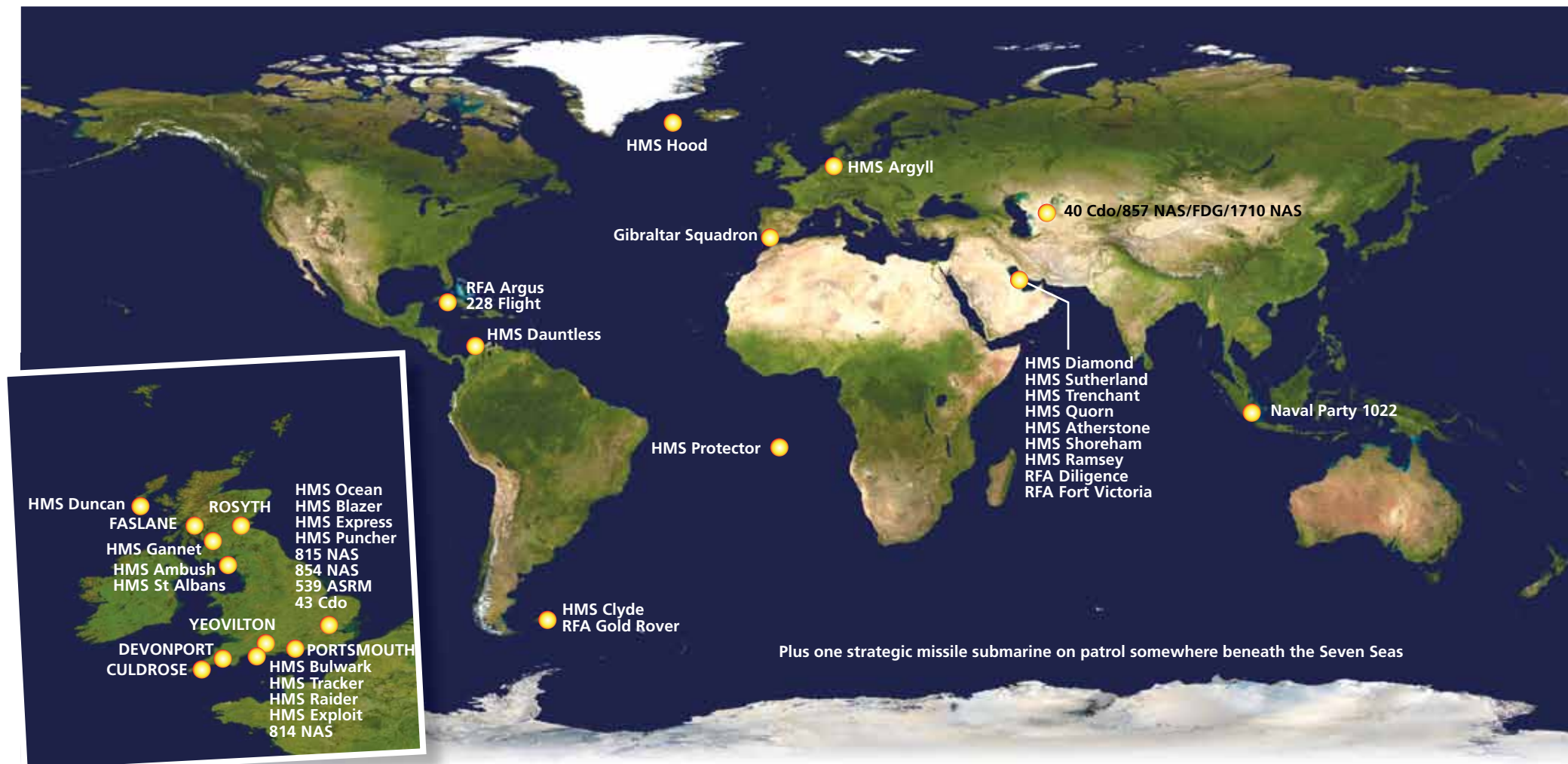
With the late summer sun dancing on the waters of the Clyde, Britain's newest submarine, £1bn hunter-killer HMS Ambush, arrives at her future home of Faslane for the first time. See page 3.

Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill, FRPU North

**GAMES
OVER**

**OLYMPIC
MISSION
COMPLETED**





WELL after all the excitement of the Olympiad, you might be finding it a tad tricky to raise spirits right now.

Unless, say, you've got a three-month key deployment to lead as the nation's flagship.

Barely had Olympic fever subsided and, more importantly for her, Operation Olympics successfully concluded, than **HMS Bulwark** was sailing at the head of the forces mustered for **Exercise Cougar 12** (see page 6) involving in excess of 3,000 souls from **Illustrious, Northumberland, Montrose, RFA Mounts Bay, MV Hartland Point, 3 Cdo Bde, 45 Cdo, 30 Cdo IX Group, 539 ASRM, 814 NAS, 815 NAS, 829 NAS, 845 NAS, 846 NAS, 854 NAS, 656 Sqn AAC** and **659 Sqn AAC**.

The green berets of **45 Commando** got in the Cougar spirit by leaping into Horsea Lake in Portsmouth to re-learn abandon ship drills (see page 6).

As for the Olympics there's a round-up of the final weeks of the intensive security mission performed by the Senior Service – led by Bulwark and helicopter carrier **HMS Ocean** – alongside its sister Forces and police in our centre pages.

After a five-week, 7,000-mile odyssey, minehunters **HMS Pembroke** and **Middleton** arrived safely back in Faslane and Portsmouth respectively, their three-year tours of duty in the Gulf done (see page 4). Their comrades still out in Bahrain are going through a massive mine warfare exercise ranging across 2,000 miles of sea right now (see page 4).

And if you need reminding of the potency of the mine, then the fate of **HMS Audacious** – our classic ship of the month – should provide a timely reminder (see page 12).

One lost ship making the headlines this past month has been **HMS Hood**; sadly, weather and currents thwarted efforts to recover her bell, but the team behind the delicate salvage operation hope to return in the future (see page 10).

HMS Kent sailed into Dover to honour another wartime naval tragedy, the Channel Dash; the ship was joined by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and a Swordfish from the **RN Historic Flight** at the unveiling of a monument to the heroes of Operation Fuller (see page 10).

Despite its age, the wonderful torpedo-bomber has been as busy as ever this display season; it proved to be star of the show at East Fortune Air Show near Edinburgh where it shared the skies with a Sea King from **HMS Gannet** (see page 13).

Keeping a 70-year-old aircraft airworthy is a bit of a challenge... almost as much as a challenge as repairing every damaged British helicopter in Afghanistan – a challenge met daily by a small team of fixers from **1710 Naval Air Squadron** (see page 17).

Joining the 1710 team in Helmand now are the men and women of **40 Commando's** battlegroup who will complete their transfer to theatre early this month, thus beginning a six-month tour of duty (see page 4).

HMS Sutherland fought off French attackers in the Gulf of Aden when she 'played' with Mirage jets (she also had a bit of a 'play' with a US hunter-killer submarine – see page 5).

Sailors from **HMS Clyde** experienced land warfare when they trained on the range with troops in the Falklands (see page 7). The patrol ship will soon be joined in the Southern Hemisphere by icebreaker **HMS Protector** which has sailed on her second deployment (see page 7).

HMS Dauntless was reminded of the scourge of disease when she visited Barbados on the latest stage of her Atlantic deployment; the ship paid her respects at the memorial to men of the 19th-Century Dauntless who died in the Caribbean from yellow fever. From there, today's Dauntless moved on to St Vincent and Cartagena (see page 9).

Dauntless is No.2 of six Type 45 destroyers, the last of which, **HMS Duncan** – 'last and best', so no gauntlet laid down there then – has just concluded her first sea trials (see pages 14-15).

And at the other end of the destroyer timeline, **HMS Edinburgh** is now the final Type 42 on active service, deploying to the South Atlantic (see page 8). It is a distinction she carries because her marginally older sister **HMS York** has paid off after a highly-charged last visit to her namesake Yorkshire city (see page 8).



Time for new entries in the captain's log

MAKING her way down the Fal estuary with the picture-postcard Cornish seaside town of St Mawes behind her is HMS Enterprise.

This is the last sight of Cornwall – or Blighty for that matter – for the next nine months for the star ship (sorry) of the Royal Navy's Hydrographic Squadron as she boldly goes (sorry, again) where few mariners have gone before.

Normally based in Devonport but having undergone a brief period of maintenance in Falmouth Docks before deploying, Enterprise will spend the autumn, winter and spring in the Middle East, taking over from her recently-returned sister HMS Echo.

The mission is to build on the impressive work carried out by Echo, updating maritime charts and gathering crucial data, eliminating 'no-go areas' for British and allied warships, and helping to improve badly-needed charts for merchant mariners.

The information the Enterprise gathers while away is fed back to the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton, world leaders in the producing of maritime charts.

The data gathering should be even more comprehensive on this deployment thanks to

the addition of a brand-new survey motor boat, named Spitfire. The 9m (30ft) boat effectively doubles the ability of the survey ship to carry out her data collection.

It did require some alterations to Enterprise to accommodate the new craft; she spent the past month in Falmouth conducting work on the davit used to lift the boat in and out of the water.

"After a lot of hard work from the ship's engineering department and contractor support it was really great to see Spitfire successfully hoisted on board so we could deploy to warmer climes," said engineering officer Lt Francis Griffiths.

While the ship's primary tasking is military data gathering, she will support the Royal Navy's – and wider international maritime – effort to keep the sea lanes safe and open to lawful mariners; the mere presence of 3,500-tonnes of battleship grey can act as a deterrent to pirates and other criminals riding the high seas.

While away Enterprise will also take part in multinational exercises promoting partnerships with other countries in the region through working together towards common goals.



First wizards of the junglies

THE first all-Fleet Air Arm crew have flown an RAF Merlin – thus taking another important step down the road to transferring the helicopters to the Commando Helicopter Force.

From 2016, the Merlin will be the mainstay of the force, based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, replacing the venerable Sea Kings which have served so redoubtably for more than four decades.

Some 65 Royal Navy personnel, including pilots, aircrewmen, engineers and support staff have been training for six months and more at RAF Benson, home of the Air Force Merlins, as they learn to fly and maintain a helicopter which is a generation more advanced than the one they're used to.

The Fleet Air Arm has been flying Merlins since the late 1990s, but it's a different model from that which will enter service with the CHF – nicknamed the Junglies.

Naval aviators on exchange with the RAF have flown Merlins over Iraq and now in Afghanistan – there are Qualified Helicopter Instructors from 848 Naval Air Squadron, CHF's training unit, on flying duties over Helmand currently.

The commando force will ultimately get its hands on the Mk4, an improved version of the Mk3 flown by two Royal Air Force squadrons, 28 and 78, whose personnel are providing key assistance in helping their Fleet Air Arm comrades make the transition.

That transition is made challenging for CHF by the need to continue to support Sea King operations in Afghanistan and exercises in the UK and in the Mediterranean – the Junglies are deployed right now on the RN's flagship deployment of the year, Cougar 2012, to work with the French.

All of which continues while the permanent detachment at Benson masters the Mk3.

The first all-RN Mk3 flight was, sensibly, a routine training sortie, led by flight commander Lt Sam Hodgkinson. "It is rewarding to be the first of many RN crewed green Merlins and to be part of an exciting period of change for CHF."

The Merlin Mk3 can carry two dozen troops with kit, or in a 'flying ambulance' role, 16 casualties on stretchers. It can also lift artillery pieces, Land Rovers, or five tonnes of equipment slung beneath it if required. It doesn't have a sonar and submarine hunting kit like its Royal Navy counterpart – but it does have a stern ramp for troops to climb on and off.

Mighty fine view

THIS is what the latest addition to the Silent Service's arsenal looks like from above.

This is HMS Ambush seen from the cargo door of a Fleet Air Arm Merlin – as the very first transfer of supplies from a helicopter to an Astute-class attack submarine is carried out.

Ambush was making her way north through the Irish Sea on her four-day, 200-mile maiden voyage from the yard where she was built in Barrow to her new home in Faslane.

In nearby waters was Portsmouth-based frigate HMS St Albans on routine training when she received instructions to deliver stores to Ambush from Faslane.

The Saint sent Sinner – callsign for her Merlin from 829 Naval Air Squadron – to collect the stores, then deliver them to Ambush.

It's a challenging manoeuvre for any aircrew and submarine given the size of a boat's conning tower, even before you throw in other variables such as sea and weather conditions. Then add the unknown of the first-ever transfer with an Astute-class submarine.

As it turned out, it proved to be a textbook operation.

Once 'feet wet' – over the water – and at the rendezvous position, Sinner established communications with the boat and PO Gavin 'Final' Furlong prepared to lower the stores down to Ambush.

"It was a short-notice task and a submarine transfer is one of the more challenging tasks that we do, but everything went to plan. It shows that the training really works," said Gavin.

The whole manoeuvre was watched with particular interest by the most senior rating aboard St Albans, WO1 Andy Knox.

Today he's the frigate's executive warrant officer – who oversees all 160-plus ratings aboard – but until joining the Saint, he spent 28 years as a submariner... including coxswain of Ambush; he was among the very first members of the boat's crew, joining her when she was still a shell in January 2008.

As for his former boat...well, nine years after she was laid down and 18 months since she was launched, Ambush was finally ready for sea.

It was a moment which has been a long time coming and Ambush's Commanding Officer Cdr Peter Green said his men were itching to show what the boat could do.

Having previously been in charge of HMS Trafalgar, he likens taking his men to sea in Ambush to "stepping into the 21st Century".

He continued: "The crew couldn't wait to start sea trials and take this magnificent vessel a step closer to beginning operations."

"It is now time to start putting Ambush through her paces and prove that this amazing piece of equipment is ready for operations."

Since her launch in January last year, Ambush has undergone final fitting out and tests, among them a first test dive in an enormous 25-metre-deep (82ft) 'dive hole' at Barrow which is long and wide enough to accommodate the 7,400-tonne boat – and almost deep enough to completely submerge her.

As well as training in the art of operating 'The Mighty Bush', the submariners assigned to her have been fostering relations with her affiliated city of Derby (which has long-standing bonds with the Silent Service and whose most famous employer, Rolls-Royce, provide the nuclear reactor which powers the hunter-killer).

Thanks to advances in technology over the Trafalgar-class boats the Astutes replace, that reactor will never need refuelling; in theory, throughout her lifespan she could remain submerged – the limitation is the amount of food Ambush can carry for her crew.

Other 'Gucci facts' include the ability to travel at speeds in excess of 20 knots while dived – the top speed is classified, but it is faster than when Ambush is on the surface. And she can carry a combination of up to 38 Spearfish torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles – she packs double the punch of a T-boat.

In terms of complexity, Ambush and her sisters have been compared with the Space Shuttle; it has taken 20 million man hours (that's the equivalent of more than 325 years...), to design and build the leviathan with her 70 miles of cabling, a sonar suite more powerful than 2,000 top-range laptops to mention just two Top Trumps facts.

All of which new Defence Equipment, Support and Technology Minister Philip Dunne learned on a visit to Barrow to see Ambush – and her sisters taking shape in the cavernous Devonshire Dock Hall on the eve of the new boat's departure.



40 Commando leader thanks supporters

THE Royal Marines commander leading his unit on a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan thanked supporters and families for their messages of goodwill.

The green berets of 40 Commando went through 11 months of intensive training to prepare them for Operation Herrick 17 – the latest half-year mission by UK forces in Helmand province, which is now under way.

Herrick 17 is an Army-led mission, with the Norton Manor-based marines battlegroup assigned to the Nar-e Saraj district of central Helmand, working as part 4 Mechanised Brigade.

The brigade completed its pre-Herrick rehearsal with a thorough exercise on Salisbury Plain at the end of August, meshing the various elements and units together.

In 40 Commando's case, its four companies of Royal Marines will be serving side-by-side with a company of Gurkhas from 1 Royal Gurkha Rifles, a Danish armoured infantry company and a Danish troop of tanks.

"40 Commando has gone through a series of excellent and graduated training packages to ensure we are ready for a challenging period based in the Nahr-e-Saraj district," said Lt Col Matt Jackson, 40 Cdo's Commanding Officer.

"Thank you to everyone for their messages of support and good wishes for a safe deployment."

In all elements of 14 regiments and battalions come under 4 Mechanised Brigade on Herrick 17; all the units of 40 Commando should be in place in theatre by the time you read this.

Fighting the maritime crime wave

A ROYAL Navy-led team is now in charge of the international effort to clamp down on piracy, terrorism and other criminal activity in vast waters east of Suez.

Cdre Bob Tarrant and his staff have taken over from Cdre Mukhtar Khan of the Pakistani Navy who've directed the operations of warships assigned to Combined Task Force 150.

The force, commanded from Bahrain, calls upon ships from more than two dozen nations to enforce maritime security in the Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Red Sea and Indian Ocean – two and a half million square miles of ocean.

Typically, the force comprises six ships, operating separately but with a single aim: stop the criminals.

During Pakistan's charge of CTF150, the task group scored some notable successes, especially in the war on drugs – which ultimately fund terrorist activities:

- Canada's HMCS Charlottetown seized 500-750kg of hashish off Yemen;
- Australia's HMAS Melbourne seized nearly 400kg bags of flour thought to be mixed with LSD;
- and the USS Nitze interdicted narcotics off Masirah Island in the Gulf of Oman – an impressive 1,243lb of hashish.

Taking the reins of the task force, whose ships presently include frigate HMS Sutherland, Cdre Tarrant stressed:

"The threat from terrorism is ever-present and affects us all. It is good to be part of an organisation that is committed to disrupting it at sea in the maritime domain.

"My team from the United Kingdom is well prepared for this role and ready to take up the fine work undertaken by our predecessors."

Mirror finishes

YOU wait three years for a minehunter to sail in from the Gulf, and then two turn up on the same day...

Admittedly one (HMS Middleton) was arriving in Pompey (where it was sunny)...

...and the other (HMS Pembroke) was making her way through the Rhu narrows nearly 400 miles away (where it wasn't quite so sunny...).

Thus ended a 7,000-mile five-week journey for half of the four-strong minehunting force which the nation maintains in the Gulf (HMS Atherstone and Shoreham have taken the place of Middleton and Pembroke respectively).

The two returnees spent most of that homeward journey in company – a journey which experienced incident and high emotion.

Incident came courtesy of the MV New Delhi Express which lost power in 'pirate alley' between Somalia and Yemen.

With a high-value cargo, she would have been at the mercy of modern-day buccaneers, but for the two RN warships which responded to the 40,000-tonne merchantman's mayday and stood guard with weapons at the ready while the New Delhi Express' crew fixed their engines.

High emotion for the 80 or so sailors on the two ships was provided in Malta when both took part in 70th anniversary commemorations of Operation Pedestal – the defining convoy operation to keep the island alive at the height of the war in the Mediterranean.

There today's sailors stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the small band of veterans of those terrible Malta convoys still with us after seven decades.

Both the New Delhi Express incident and the Pedestal ceremonies provided a welcome change from the ongoing effort to maintain the RN's world-leading expertise in minehunting in the most challenging climatic conditions above the water (top temperatures of 50°C and, during the monsoon season winds of 50mph) and below (dust, silt, mud and the like).

With a force maintained in Bahrain now for a good five years or more there is a wealth of experience in the mine warfare world, thanks to the rotation of the crews of the Sandown-class ships (all based in Faslane) and Hunts (which all call Portsmouth home) every six to eight months.

"My team have had the honour of serving in Middleton for over eight months during which we have conducted missions across the military spectrum," explained Middleton's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Steve Higham.

"We have trained hard with other navies and proven the Royal Navy's capability of mine hunting and disposal in the most challenging of conditions.

"Throughout, Middleton ship's company have conducted themselves with fortitude and determination. Acting as ambassadors for the United Kingdom, they have been a credit to their country and the Royal Navy.

"The separation has been hard, the distances great, but the encouragement and support of families has been key to our success."

Pembroke got through seven crews (there are eight in total in the Sandown world of 1st Mine Counter-measures Squadron) since leaving the Clyde in October 2009.

Around 100 family members and friends were waiting on the Faslane quayside for the small ship's return – as was a tug to squirt its appreciation at a job

well done.

The words of Pembroke's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Chris Allan, mirror those of his counterpart in charge of Middleton.

"The deployment has been immensely rewarding both professionally in terms of our contribution to the ongoing mine countermeasures effort and for the challenge of the long passage home for a small ship," he said.

"The ship and the team are incredibly hard working and it is their effort which has made this deployment such a success."

■ And, do you know, the sad thing is Middleton and Pembroke left just before all the fun began...

For as they were adjusting to the cooler surroundings of their natural homes, the rest of the RN mine warfare force in the Gulf was gearing up for one of the biggest minehunting exercises ever staged in the Middle East.

Warships from two dozen nations were committed to the 11-day 'work-out', which began as we went to press and was spread across some 2,000 miles of ocean.

Led by the Americans' Naval Forces Central Command, IMCMEX 12 – not a long-forgotten Aztec leader but a military acronym: International Mine Counter Measures Exercise – sought to test the abilities of different nations to work together to keep the sea lanes open and hunt underwater explosive devices in some of the most challenging waters imaginable.

Visiting Bahrain – the hub of the Royal Navy's effort east of Suez – Defence Secretary Philip Hammond joined HMS Ramsey, where he announced the Senior Service's participation in the exercise and discussed the RN's ongoing mission in the region, courtesy of the staff of the UK Maritime Component Command – the UK's senior naval staff east of Suez.

In addition to the mine force, HMS Diamond is currently on patrol in the Gulf while HMS Sutherland (see opposite) is prowling the Indian Ocean as part of the international effort to safeguard the highways of the Seven Seas.

IMCMEX was divided into three areas: one off Bahrain, another in the Gulf of Oman, and the third near the Bab-al-Mandeb Strait – gateway to the Red Sea.

Each day 17 million barrels of oil pass through the narrows between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, while 3-4 million barrels are moved through the Bab-al-Mandeb.

In a typical week, more than 500 ships pass through Hormuz – three in every five of them energy carriers (including liquefied natural gas which is used in the UK) – and those departing the Gulf must use a two-mile-wide outbound traffic lane to reach the open waters of the Arabian Sea and beyond.

All of which underlines the importance of IMCMEX.

"The UK is committed to a standing presence in the Gulf to ensure freedom of navigation in international waters such as the Strait of Hormuz," said Mr Hammond after visiting Ramsey.

"IMCMEX is part of this work, and will allow the Royal Navy to showcase its cutting-edge mine counter measure experience, expertise and technology. It is also an excellent opportunity to work with other nations to enhance international co-operation and interoperability with others operating in this crucial field."



● Hello, I'm back (Part 1)... A wave from one of Pembroke's leading hands as the Sandown returns to the Clyde...



● Hello, I'm back (Part 2)... A wave from one of Middleton's senior rates as the Hunt enters a sunny Portsmouth, while (below) junior rating Keith Williams proposes to his girlfriend Nicola Griffiths-Hayes (who said 'yes'...)

Pictures: LA(Photos) 'Geri' Halliwell and Claire Myers



Buyout deal ends ten-year fish ship loan

AFTER nearly a decade 'on loan', the three warships which are arguably the Royal Navy's most visible presence in home waters have been bought outright.

The MOD has secured the future of three River-class fishery protection/patrol vessels in a deal with industry that will save taxpayers millions of pounds.

All three ships – HMS Tyne, Severn and Mersey – entered service in 2003 initially under a five-year lease to the Royal Navy from their builders Vosper Thornycroft (who have subsequently become part of BAE Systems).

The lease was due to be renewed in 2013 but rather than face having to pay more to rent the vessels – £7m a year for all three – Whitehall signed a £39m contract to buy the ships outright, keeping them in service with the Royal Navy for the next ten years.

The trio – nicknamed the 'Cod Squad' – are based in Portsmouth, but are rarely seen in their home port as they range around UK waters protecting fishing stocks, working alongside colleagues in the Marine Management Organisation.

But the ships also carry out the wider mission of being the RN's constant eyes and ears in home waters.

Their additional duties include maritime security and counter-terrorism, search and rescue and operations to tackle smuggling and other illegal activity.

Each ship is expected to be available for duties 300 days a year, with one third of the crew being changed when the vessels return from patrol to a myriad of smaller ports around the British Isles.

On average, the fishery boarding teams carry out two inspections of trawlers every day on patrol; they're responsible for 80,000 square miles of sea extending some 200 miles from the coast.

Cdr Graham Lovatt, the head of the Fishery Protection Squadron – the oldest unit in the Royal Navy, tracing its history back to the mid-15th Century – said the three River-class vessels had "repeatedly proven themselves to be extremely capable ships."

"With maritime security and fishery protection roles, they play a vital part in protecting the nation's interests close to home. I am very pleased that the MOD has secured their continued use."

It's bustling on the Black Duke

IT'S all go on Monmouth – but not at sea just yet.

The ship's bridge reverberates to the sound of grinding tools as a new sensor mount is fitted; welders work on the engine turbines, while at the bows, weapon engineers align the new barrel of the 4.5in main gun as it is craned into place.

Following a well-earned summer leave after a busy six weeks of training at the hands of the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training, the ship's company returned to the Black Duke in her home base of Devonport to carry out some intensive maintenance.

During this period of support, the ship has bristled with scaffolding as sailors and support personnel clambered over every inch of her – no matter how hard to reach – with the aim of leaving the jetty with Monmouth at the very top of her game in time for a lovely spot of pre-deployment training.

"It's been a busy year so everyone's looking forward to future deployments and having this time alongside with shore-side help allows us to get some deep maintenance done, replace the items we need to and make sure everything is as good as it can be before sailing on any deployments," said LS(Sea) Matthew Ashcroft.

Razors for the last Ark

HMS Ark Royal will be scrapped – but her sister HMS Illustrious will be preserved as a permanent memorial to the ‘Harrier carriers’ which have been the mainstay of Royal Navy operations for more than 30 years.

After months of negotiating – and intense media speculation – the fate of Britain’s most famous aircraft carrier was announced by defence minister Philip Dunne.

Despite talk of turning her into a floating hotel, helipad, museum or even sinking her as a giant artificial reef, Mr Dunne said Ark Royal would be broken up at the same yard in Turkey which recycled her older sister HMS Invincible.

But he also revealed that when HMS Illustrious leaves service in 2014 after 32 years under the White Ensign, the aim would be to preserve her as a lasting tribute to the three Invincible-class aircraft carriers which saw action from the Falklands to the Adriatic and Gulf over the past three decades.

Business leaders, charities, trusts and other organisations will be invited to come forward with suggestions on the best use of Lusty so that she remains ‘intact’.

Mr Dunne told fellow MPs that it was “important that we preserve the legacy of the Royal Navy’s Invincible-class carriers.

“When the last of these retires from the Royal Navy, we would like to see her preserved as a legacy to the work she, Invincible and Ark Royal have done to protect the UK over three decades.

“We would be keen to seek innovative proposals from a range of organisations, including private sector companies, charities and trusts.”

As for the fate of Ark Royal, Mr Dunne said the Ministry of Defence had weighed up the various proposals for an alternative use for the ship, but ultimately recycling by Turkish shipbreaker Leyal, who are paying around £3m for the hull, was the most viable option.

He added: “Bids received for further use were either not feasible or appropriate, or carried too much risk.”

Mr Dunne, Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, continued: “HMS Illustrious is more suitable for preservation for further non-military use and, as such, is expected to attract interest from organisations who would be able to put forward mature and viable proposals, in keeping with the role and history of the Invincible class of ships.”

Since her final entry into Portsmouth in December 2010, Ark has been stripped of useful kit and now sits in an inner basin. Over the winter she’ll be prepared for her journey to Turkey under tow.

Fishermen saved by 771

RESCUERS from 771 Naval Air Squadron were scrambled to save the five crew of a sinking fishing boat.

By the time the red and grey Sea King from Culdrose arrived at the site of the mayday sent out by the Chloe T, some 20 miles south-east of Plymouth, the crew had already taken to their life raft.

Despite relatively-benign weather conditions, the Penzance-based trawler was taking in water in her engine-room – the intrush was too much for the crew to deal with so they abandoned ship.

“Initially one of the cross-Channel ferries was on scene, and they were getting ready to deploy their boat to help. But they obviously decided once we arrived to leave it in the safe hands of the Navy,” said observer Lt Cdr Paul Robertston.

“But it gave all the passengers on board something to see as we winched the crew off.”

None of the trawler crew needed medical attention; their boat subsequently sank.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Ben Sutton, HMS Sutherland



Top guns – and top gunners

NOW that’s bound to wake up the neighbourhood...

This is a French Mirage jet tearing low across the Gulf of Aden.

Its target? Her Majesty’s Ship Sutherland, as the Devonport-based frigate came under ‘attack’ from a pair of French Mirage jets of 3/11 Course Squadron based in Djibouti during air defence training.

At high altitude the Mirages can notch up speeds in excess of 1,500mph (more than twice the speed of sound). At low level like this, they’re limited to ‘only’ 690mph...

... and Sutherland can summon 39.5mph flat out (34.4kts to be precise during speed trials back in 2008).

At its top low-altitude speed, a Mirage will eat up 1,012ft every second – which gives sailors like AB Matthew Herring (pictured below on the Minigun) three seconds to react; the range of the Minigun – a Gatling gun which spews out up to 6,000 rounds a minute – is a little over 3,000ft.

No pressure then...

The training – known in military parlance as an ADEX (Air Defence EXercise) came about thanks to the personal touch: a couple of French pilots came aboard the frigate when she took a break from her patrols to take on supplies, and thus the seeds were sown for a ‘workout’ which tested airmen and sailors alike.

“It was fantastic training for the entire ship’s company – we practised our core warfighting skills in the operations room, ship handling from the bridge, and there was battle damage overlaid to test the entire ship’s company,” said Sutherland’s operations officer Lt Cdr Tom Westwood.

“The Mirages carried out simulated missile raids and bombing attacks for an hour. Sutherland defeated each incoming raid and manoeuvred aggressively to ensure all her

weapons and sensors could engage the targets.

“The Mirage pilots commented on the difficulty they faced attacking the ship due to her manoeuvres and the skill of the ship’s company.”

They’ll be back to give it another go; Sutherland intends to repeat the exercise with the French when she’s next in the area.

It’s not merely the gunners aboard the Fighting Clan who’ve been tested recently.

After a short visit to the Omani capital of Muscat, the Fighting Clan headed out into the Gulf of Oman to join US forces for a three-day submarine hunt as Sutherland and the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Nitze tried to find an American hunter-killer boat lurking somewhere below.

Luckily, the Devonport-based frigate could call upon the ship’s Merlin, callsign Warlock, to track down the ‘foe’; the helicopter is widely acknowledged in naval circles as the best there is at sub hunting.

For the Merlin crew, who’ve devoted most of the deployment to maritime security and board and search operations with Sutherland’s Royal Marines Commando detachment, a spot of ‘pinging’ was a welcome return to the helicopter’s *raison d’être*.

“The anti-submarine exercise allowed us to refresh and refine our core and advanced anti-submarine warfare skills in challenging environmental conditions,” said Merlin Flight Commander Lt Earl Kingston.

“It was the perfect opportunity for my team to adjust our traditional tactics – normally employed in more temperate climes – to the unique oceanography of this region.

“And it allowed us to work closely with our American cousins and make use of their submarine, so we gained an



insight into the different tactics they employ.”

Before the exercise Sutherland and the USS Nitze conducted a simultaneous replenishment at sea, taking on fuel from the aptly-named USNS Supply, an

American fast combat support ship.

Sutherland will continue her wide-ranging mission – a combination of keeping the sea lanes open for lawful usage by mariners and working with friendly nations and navies in the region – until the year’s end.

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New faces at the top

THERE'S a new man at the helm of the nation's flagship. Capt Andrew Burns assumed command of **HMS Bulwark** as the assault ship sailed home to Plymouth after operating as the command and control centre for the Dorset Police during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

He said: "To take command of the Fleet flagship is a privilege and honour. I look forward to guiding the ship through its future programme in protecting our nation's interests."

Capt Burns joined the RN in 1989 and has commanded the minehunter HMS Berkeley and Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset.

His most recent job was Commander Sea Training to FOST, responsible for preparing ships for their operational tasking.

Capt Burns takes over from Capt Alex Burton who has been appointed to the MOD as Head of Maritime Capability and promoted to Commodore.

...meanwhile there's a new man at the helm across the Hamoaze at **HMS Raleigh**, where Capt Bob Fancy has relieved Capt Steve Murdoch as the Torpoint establishment's Commanding Officer.

Capt Fancy, 48, said: "I am extremely honoured to be given command of HMS Raleigh and the opportunity to come home to the West Country."

"The prospect of being involved in such a broad spectrum of training as well as representing the Royal Navy in the local area is both exciting and a real privilege."

Capt Fancy, a submariner, joined the Royal Navy in 1983. He has served in a number of diesel and nuclear-powered submarines and commanded HMS Trafalgar and Triumph.

He has held a variety of appointments ashore in Fleet Headquarters, the Permanent Joint Headquarters and at the MOD and in 2009 was seconded to industry where he developed two major leadership and training programmes for a large multinational company.

Capt Murdoch leaves the RN after 32 years. He took command of Raleigh in December 2009, since when he devised and oversaw a major review of initial naval training and the introduction of a new ten-week course for recruits.

He said: "Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh has been my last appointment in the Royal Navy and I could not have asked for a more enjoyable or rewarding final posting."

"I have been very fortunate to have been supported by a dedicated, professional, hardworking and loyal group of people and would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone sincerely for their invaluable support and friendship and for helping me make Raleigh the finest training establishment in the Royal Navy."



Picture: PO(Phot) Ray Jones, HMS Illustrious

Rekindling the amphibious fire

FULLY kitted out in the cavernous hangar of HMS Illustrious are members of the carrier's boarding team, honing their skills off the South Coast.

The carrier's crew were gearing up for the Royal Navy's key deployment of 2012 – a three-month amphibious 'work-out' in the Mediterranean testing warships, Royal Marines commandos and naval air power.

Cougar 12, which has just begun, will see four warships, one amphibious support ship, a giant ro-ro ferry/transporter, three commando units and helicopters and personnel from eight Fleet Air Arm and Army Air Corps squadrons committed to the three-month deployment – in all more than 3,000 sailors, Royal Marines, soldiers and airmen.

They will take part in two large-scale exercises, interspersed with various smaller manoeuvres and training and goodwill visits – in some cases to places which rarely see the White Ensign.

The deployment will be the second test of the UK Response Force Task Group, formed under the 2010 defence review, which was called upon in anger last year to support operations off Libya: HMS Ocean launched repeated Apache gunships strikes from her flight deck.

Twelve months on and Portsmouth-based HMS Illustrious takes Ocean's place as the helicopter carrier assigned to the task group.

She'll be joined by the nation's flagship HMS Bulwark, from where Cdre Paddy McAlpine, Commander UK Task Group, and 3 Commando Brigade's Brig Martin Smith

Participating are



- HMS Bulwark
- HMS Illustrious
- HMS Northumberland
- HMS Montrose
- RFA Mounts Bay
- MV Hartland Point
- Headquarters of 3 Commando Brigade
- 45 Commando
- 30 Commando IX Group
- 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines
- 815 Naval Air Squadron (Lynx Mk8)
- 814 Naval Air Squadron (Merlins)
- 829 Naval Air Squadron (Merlins)
- 845 Naval Air Squadron (Jungle Sea Kings)
- 846 Naval Air Squadron (Jungle Sea Kings)
- 854 Naval Air Squadron (Bagger Sea Kings)
- 656 Squadron Army Air Corps (Apache gunships)
- 659 Squadron Army Air Corps (Lynx)

with their respective joint blue and green staffs will direct Cougar.

They will oversee two key exercises: Corsican Lion, working hand-in-hand with the French, and later this autumn the force will shift to the

Adriatic to work with the Albanian military.

Corsican Lion, which devours the second half of October, sees the Cougar force link up with France's flagship FS Charles de Gaulle – the most powerful surface ship in western European waters.

Her flight deck will be the launchpad for Super Etendard and Rafale jets, offering a first real glimpse of how the Response Force Task Group should look at the end of the decade when HMS Queen Elizabeth enters service with the Royal Navy.

And in the nearer future, Corsican Lion is the most important strand of Cougar and a major step along the road towards forging a fully-operational Anglo-French force by 2016.

The deployment also sees some initial training off the Cornish coast, including amphibious landings near St Austell, before the force makes for the Mediterranean.

There will be planned exercises with US and Algerian forces and visits to Algeria and Malta – particularly poignant for Illustrious as she has ties with the island going back to her predecessor and the dark days of World War 2. Potentially, this could be the carrier's final visit to Malta before she decommissions in 2014.

"Cougar 12 provides us with a superb opportunity to rekindle our amphibious capability after a prolonged period when our focus has been on operations elsewhere," said Cdre McAlpine.

His force stands at five days' notice to deploy anywhere in the world should the government require it; in theory the task group can sail to within 12 nautical miles of 147 nations – that's three out of four countries in the world.

Bristol move to help port expand

ORDINARILY we wouldn't get too excited by a ship moving 140 metres.

But when it's HMS Bristol – which doesn't move all that often – then there's a bit more to write home about.

The Falklands veteran, which serves as a floating accommodation and training ship at the foot of Whale Island in Portsmouth is being shifted slightly further to the east.

The short move will remove a pinch point in the harbour which restricts larger ships manoeuvring at the commercial port opposite Bristol's current berth.

By moving the destroyer just 140 metres (459ft), it will create an increased turning circle of 300 metres (984ft) – key for the port's success as it receives bigger and bigger vessels (it can now accommodate ships up to 240 metres – 787ft – long).

Portsmouth City Council, which owns and operates the port, is paying for the construction of a new berth for Bristol and, working in partnership with the Royal Navy, plans are being finalised for the new mooring berth and associated works.

Work will start towards the end of next month and be completed by early February 2013, when Bristol will once again be back in service.

The ship was the only Type 82 destroyer ever built for the Royal Navy, designed to defend a class of aircraft carriers which never saw the light of day. Since paying off in 1991, she's become a permanent fixture in Portsmouth Harbour where today she's used by around 17,000 sailors and Sea Cadets every year.

Princess Anne sees Queen

WHICH, again, ordinarily wouldn't be news... but the Queen in question was HMS Queen Elizabeth, first of two new super-carriers taking shape at Rosyth.

The Princess Royal, who is Admiral and Chief Commandant for Women in the Royal Navy, as well as Commodore-in-Chief of Portsmouth – the carriers' future home – was given a brief on the status of the massive shipbuilding programme, before touring the first carrier.

The two ships – Prince of Wales completes the class – are being built in half a dozen yards around the UK under the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, the coalition of MOD and industry overseeing the multi-billion-pound project, and assembled in a specially-extended dry dock on the Forth.

"The princess was extremely interested to learn about the way the Aircraft Carrier Alliance operates and to see the how far the programme has come," said Programme Director Ian Booth.

"As the work to assemble the first of class accelerates the scale of these ships is becoming more and more apparent."



Royals take a dip to abandon ship

YOU can never have too many pictures of Royal Marines rather ungainly flapping about in uncharacteristic red suits...

So thank you to

- (a) Leading Photographer Andy Laidlaw
- (b) his comrades in 45 Commando and
- (c) the new £2.5m sea survival centre at Horsea Island in Portsmouth

for providing us with these rather jolly images of commandos swapping khaki and green berets for red 'once only' suits and yellow hoods.

Of course, Royals don't do this for fun. They're doing this because they're about to spend a concerted amount of time at sea as Britain's elite amphibious infantry get back to basics.

The Arbroath-based marines are the nation's lead commando unit – which means they are on-call to move at short notice anywhere around the world should the government require them.

With the Royals lined up to sail on Cougar 12 (see above), the extended period of sea time – after a decade when the commandos have been committed almost exclusively in the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan – meant making sure the RM Condor men were 'in date' should it come to abandoning a sinking ship, just like their colleagues in the General Service RN.

Which meant an 800-mile round trip from Angus to Hampshire and the new Ardent building (named after the frigate lost in the Falklands), home to the Sea Survival Training Centre.

Every man in 45 Commando

taking part in Cougar – including CO Lt Col Mike Tanner – was expected to complete the drill.

After learning the theory of sea survival, about the kit and how to don the bright suits, pull over the face masks (to prevent swallowing sea water), and right the 25-man life rafts, it was on to Horsea Lake.

Having had the sea survival experience we can tell you that the lake, which has an inlet/outlet into Portsmouth Harbour, is about 25ft (8m) deep, tastes pretty horrible and isn't very warm, even in late summer; however, after the initial shock of entering the water, you quickly warm up as you make for the life raft.

Once in the lake, stricken mariners are expected to swim backwards to the raft – and boats can whizz around trying to stir up the waters to simulate waves.

Clyde lets rip with RLC

GRENAADAAAADE...

ET 'Dom' Jolley gets ready to launch a grenade – a live one at that – on the ranges of East Falkland as sailors from the islands' naval guardian, HMS Clyde, experienced life with the infantry for a day.

The Falklands' Roulement Infantry Company – the Army unit regularly rotated through the South Atlantic islands – invited a cross-section of sailors from the patrol ship to join them for the close-quarters battle experience.

Engineers, seamen, chefs and even the Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Mark Anderson, all had the opportunity to fire a number of weapons and grenades. The day culminated in a tough bayonet exercise across the range.

"The adrenaline was really pumping", said ET Jolley. "It was a great chance to see what the soldiers get up to down here. When else would you ever get the opportunity to throw a live grenade?"

The favour was returned the following week as Clyde took a number of the soldiers to sea overnight. Despite rough conditions (not entirely unexpected in the Falklands in winter...), the soldiers quickly gained their sea legs and took part in a damage control demonstration, weapons firing and flight deck sports whilst at sea.

"It's been a great couple of days, and really interesting to get out on the ground with our colleagues in green", said Clyde's Sub Lt Deborah Wiseman, who celebrated her birthday with a bang; it fell on the range day.

Clyde often works with Army units stationed in the islands – although typically it's a case of acting as a 'troop carrier' for them on exercises; on occasions she's given squaddies a lengthier seagoing experience on visits to South Georgia.

The troops will be back aboard Clyde – which has a crew of just over 40 – shortly; the patrol ship is gearing up to embark 100 soldiers during routine exercises around the Falklands.



Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East

Going where it's hot and cold

LITTLE more than two months after she returned from the ice, new survey ship HMS Protector was bound for Antarctica for the second time to pick up where she left off.

The Portsmouth-based icebreaker and hydrographic survey vessel left the Solent in mid-September for a protracted eight-month second deployment.

Protector, which is on loan to the Royal Navy while the long-term fate of HMS Endurance is determined, will carry out four 'work periods' around Antarctica during the austral summer.

Once again, she'll use her survey motor boat James Caird IV and onboard multi-beam echo sounder to chart waters which are poorly mapped – but increasingly used by mariners with the rise in eco-tourism to the frozen continent.

On her way south the 5,000-tonne icebreaker will visit St Helena to conduct surveys of the harbour in preparation for the construction of a new jetty.

The ship's due to spend four days working around the British Overseas Territory, which lies around 800 miles from another remote outpost of Empire, Ascension Island, and some 2,000 miles from Cape Town.

St Helena relies entirely on the sea for transportation – there is no airport on the volcanic isle.

But one is about to be built – and to allow shipping to support the

construction a new jetty must be built.

Before that takes place, the waters of Rupert's Bay need surveying – and hence the need for Protector's hydrographic and environmental survey expertise.

As well as working in the bay, the icebreaker is due to carry out a survey of the wreck of WW2 tanker RFA Darkdale, which lies off neighbouring James Bay.

The Darkdale was sunk by U-boat in 1941 – she broke in two and quickly sank with an unknown quantity of fuel still onboard.

Seven decades later and oil has been seeping from the wreck and islanders and environmentalists are keen to know about the potential environmental effects of the leakage.

Protector will also help with the re-supply of British Antarctic Survey stations in the region – a mission helped by the fact that she carries a very useful and powerful crane, plus three BV tracked vehicles and four quad bikes, operated by her Royal Marines detachment – who are the Royal Navy's experts in working in extreme temperatures.

"Building upon the success – and the lessons identified – from HMS Protector's inaugural deployment to Antarctica, the ship and her company are ready in all respects to face again the challenges of the Southern Ocean," said her CO Capt Peter Sparkes, who also led the ship on her maiden deployment.



Jessica Soanes

Jessica's Dad has served in the Forces for many years. Each year she takes part in our adventure breaks for children with additional needs and disabilities.

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Help



● The Colours Party and Guard await inspection by York's Lord Mayor Cllr Keith Hyman... who promptly obliged (below)



● The Royal Marines Band leads the farewell parade and (below) Cdr Rex Cox addresses guests at a final reception on the flight deck while his ship was berthed in Hull





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Pictures: LA(Phot) Paul Halliwell, FRPU North

Sun sets on York

AND then there was one.

After four decades as the mainstay of the Navy's operations across the globe, from all-out war (Falklands, Iraq, Libya) to the dividends of peace, only HMS Edinburgh is left of the 14 built to sail under the White Ensign.

By the time you read this, the good ship HMS York will be plain York, having lowered the Senior Service's standard for the final time.

Before that last active duty in a career spanning 27 years, the ship and her 240 sailors reluctantly cut the ties which have bound them with their namesake city since the mid-1980s as they bade farewell to Yorkshire's historic county town.

The White Rose warship spent five days in Hull – as close as she can get to York – where she opened her gangway to the general public for a last look around.

Emotions reached a climax with a farewell parade through the ancient streets of York, a half-hour final exercising of the Freedom of the City, which ended at Duncombe Place, a stone's throw from the iconic minster.

There Lord Mayor Cllr Keith Hyman took the salute and received the Freedom Scroll – the historic document which permits the sailors to march through his city with bayonets fixed, drums beating and all that pomp and ceremony – while the public were treated to the rare sight of a Fleet Air Arm Lynx in these parts.

The destroyer's ship's flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron decamped to Imphal Barracks for the weekend so they too could be part of York's farewell to its own warship.

Aircrew and sailors were invited to an official civic reception at the Mansion House – one of various 'thank-you' events organised by the city and its inhabitants for the ship (we're told the good folk of York hosted the sailors royally in its many hostels).

The city's rugby union team laid on a special final match for the destroyer's XV at their

Clifton Park home, while pupils and teachers at Applefield special needs school were treated not just to a visit from members of the ship's company but also the Lynx, which set down in the grounds to deliver the guests.

The school has long benefited from the kind hearts and deep pockets of the sailors who've supported it as one of numerous affiliates HMS York enjoys.

The final full day of York's visit to the region saw her host pre-arranged tours for a number of interested youth groups and organisations.

"This visit was one of celebration and appreciation of the sterling service which this exceptional ship has offered her country during her 27 years at sea," said Cdr Rex Cox, York's final commanding officer.

"Bringing her back home to Yorkshire was, without question, not only the absolute pinnacle of this celebration, but also a very poignant and dignified moment in her long and illustrious life.

"We have always enjoyed exceptional links with York. I know that my crew's been honoured and excited to show off their ship once more to the Yorkshire people, who have always shown unparalleled hospitality and enthusiasm for this great ship."

This great ship as Cdr Cox calls her was built by Swan Hunter on the Tyne, into which she was launched in June 1982. Three years later she was commissioned into the Royal Navy, thus raising the curtain on a 27-year career.

She carried out four deployments to the Gulf in the 1990s and saw front-line action in 2003 when she was one of three Type 42s assigned to the naval armada mustered for the invasion of Iraq.

Since then she's made the news with sister ship HMS Gloucester, evacuating British nationals from Beirut during the Israel-Lebanon conflict, ferrying evacuees to Cyprus.

And in 2011 – during her last operational deployment – she

was sent to Malta to assist in the evacuation of British personnel during the Libyan uprising.

That was followed in December by the high-profile shadowing of a Russian task group through British waters around the top of Scotland – the ships had been forced into the more sheltered waters closer to the coast to avoid some severe winter storms.

Since then York has been getting to know the Russians again, this time on Anglo-French-American-Russian exercises in the Baltic, culminating in a visit to St Petersburg.

The destroyer left Portsmouth for the final time at the beginning of the month and headed for Brest in France where she showed off the capabilities of the Royal Navy to French military students.

D98 – "where life is great", as the naval rhyme goes – made her final entry into Portsmouth a little after 2pm on Thursday September 20 2012.

In keeping with Naval tradition the ship flew a long, narrow decommissioning pennant (which trailed off her flight deck and into the Solent) as she sailed into port for the last time (pictured below by LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum belching a Type 42's sepia-coloured fumes).

The veteran destroyer fired a 17-gun salute as she approached Southsea and the saluting gun at Fort Blockhouse, Gosport, responded in kind.

The weather was clement, permitting her Lynx helicopter to fly past as York entered harbour.

"It has been an absolute privilege to command HMS York for the final 12 months of her 27 year in-service life," said Cdr Cox. "As York makes her final entry to Portsmouth, she does so with pride.

"There is obviously some sadness in bidding farewell to any ship, but, more than anything, this is a time to honour her and her achievements."

York was decommissioned in Portsmouth Naval Base one week later, leaving HMS Edinburgh as

the 'last of the old breed'...

...which was back at sea on active duties as her older sister York bowed out.

The Fortress of the Sea slipped out of Pompey at the end of the month bound for the South Atlantic on the very last operational deployment not just by her, but by any Type 42 destroyer.

With the sixth and final successor Type 45 destroyer, HMS Duncan, due in Portsmouth around next Easter (see pages 14-15), Edinburgh can bow out gracefully after just over 27 years' served.

Quiet pastures lie in the future. For now there's a six-month deployment to complete.

Like those who have gone before her (Dauntless and before that Montrose), the Fortress of the Sea will be ranging throughout the North and South Atlantic, reassuring British citizens in far-flung places where the Union Flag (or variations thereof) flies.

D97 – "where life is heaven" – will also join in the fight against drug-trafficking off West Africa.

Since returning from her second-to-last deployment in December – also to the Southern Hemisphere – Edinburgh's undergone an intensive period of training and maintenance to prepare her for the tasks this austral summer.

"I am extremely proud of the way my ship's company has responded to the many challenges we have faced during our preparations for this operational deployment," said her Commanding Officer Cdr Nick Borbone.

"Edinburgh might be the last of the class but she remains a capable ship with a highly-trained and motivated ship's company that is determined to preserve the fine tradition that the Type 42s have established in 30 years of service."

Once finished south of the equator, the destroyer will move to the Caribbean and USA before returning home to Portsmouth in March.



Dauntless has 'bean busy



ON HER first visit to Colombia, HMS Dauntless provided the impressively steely setting for defence talks between Britain and Colombia when she visited Cartagena.

The new Type 45 destroyer served as a floating venue for events promoting the best of British on the latest leg of her Auriga 12 deployment to the North and South Atlantic.

After patrols of the North and South Atlantic, Dauntless moved to the warmer waters of the Caribbean: first Barbados and then Colombia's historic northern port (*the destroyer's pictured, left, by LA (Phot) Nicky Wilson approaching Cartagena*).

There, recently-appointed Minister for International Security Strategy, Dr Andrew Murrison, held the first annual Anglo-Colombian strategic defence summit with his opposite number from the South American state.

Dauntless also served as the venue for the second of the 'Defence Security Industry' days the ship has hosted while deployed (the first was in Lagos, Nigeria), a floating showcase for UK firms and trade.

So while many of the ship's company were off enjoying the sights and sounds of the ancient walled city – proclaimed a world heritage site by UNESCO as the best preserved fortified city in South America – their shipmates toiled to prepare the destroyer and ensure she was a fitting venue to support this sales/diplomatic role.

"It's hard work getting all this sort of thing right – especially in this heat," said LStd Clare Knapper, who worked in temperatures of mid-20s Celsius and humidity over 70 per cent: hot and sticky.

"But it's part of the job when it all comes together like this."

Also part of the job has been showing off the £1bn destroyer as the best of British, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art etc etc. So it was again in Colombia as the destroyer hosted 44 trainee officers from the *Escuela Naval de Cadetes Almirante Padilla* – the Colombian counterpart to Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

"Of course everyone thinks of a warship in its primary war-fighting role, because that's the iconic image of what we do, but events like this help to demonstrate some of the additional roles – and attributes – that a modern and versatile warship like Dauntless can deliver," said her Commanding Officer, Capt Will Warrender.

These waters might be new to today's Dauntless, but they are not to Dauntlesses past (and we're discounting the fictional flagship from *Pirates of the Caribbean* here...).

In St Matthias churchyard, Bridgetown, Barbados there stands a memorial to the crew of Her Majesty's Screw Frigate Dauntless, 33 guns, which arrived in Carlisle Bay in November 1852, with yellow fever on board.

The kindness and assistance afforded to the warship by the

islanders at that time is immortalised by the memorial. The ship, with a crew of 330, was badly affected by the disease; it killed 85 men, almost half the number of the modern day Dauntless' crew.

The ship remained in Barbados receiving medical aid until March 1853, by which time she was clear of disease and able to continue her journey homewards.

Local military historian Maj Mike Hartland invited sailors from the modern Type 45 destroyer to join him on a visit to the site when today's ship called in at Barbados.

"Our visit to the memorial was very humbling and served as a stark reminder of how lucky we are in the modern Royal Navy, when we have 'state of the art' medical facilities and the means or ability to get our sailors to hospitals and specialist assistance quickly" said Lt Cdr El Stack, the ship's operations officer.

She added: "I would much rather serve in the modern version of Dauntless than have had to endure what sailors did in those days."

After Barbados, another small Caribbean island with strong ties with the RN: St Vincent.

D33 has five St Vincent-born sailors in her ship's company, so when she entered the Caribbean, the opportunity for them to pay a quick visit home was too good to miss.

The island was the scene of much rejoicing when the Vincentian sailors arrived to introduce their ship to the island, and were able to get ashore for a couple of days leave.

Capt Warrender said "I think it is incredibly important that when we get the opportunity, we support our Caribbean crew members and make the most of days like today.

"We may have been away from home for five months but for these sailors, they have been away from their island homes for much, much longer."

On departing and being picked back up by his ship, LSA Asha McMillan 30, who has not been home to Mesopotamia, St Vincent, since 2010, said: "I feel like crying now that we are leaving again but you have to look at it as a bonus, we never thought we were coming here on this trip, so a bonus it is."

Right now, Dauntless should be conducting counter-narcotic patrols in the Caribbean having just completed the largest and longest running exercise in the region, UNITAS; the war games trace their history back to the late 1950s.

The British destroyer worked alongside a dozen warships from Brazil (BNS Greenhalgh, formerly HMS Broadsword), Canada, Colombia, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and host nations the USA, as part of a wide-ranging test of the different navies to work together.

After five months away and having circumnavigated the Atlantic on her Auriga 12 deployment, she's now on her homeward journey and will arrive in Portsmouth at the end of this month.



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'Great' Argyll in Hamburg

PUTTING the 'great' into Great Britain as they rode the Olympic wave were the men and women of HMS Argyll who spent four days in Germany's biggest port flying the flag for the UK.

The Devonport-based frigate became the latest Royal Navy warship in 2012 to head up the Elbe to Hamburg.

All Argyll's predecessors – Ocean, St Albans and Tyne have visited the great Hanseatic city this year – championed the UK in some form during their spells alongside.

But in this Type 23's case the aim was to make use of the Government's 2012 campaign to promote UK sport, nature and innovation to an overseas audience – reinforcing the 'great' in Great Britain.

Which shouldn't be too hard in Germany as many *Volk* refer not to the UK (*Vereinigtes Königreich*) but *Grossbritannien*.

HMS Argyll was invited to Hamburg to enhance the UK participation in Hamburg's prestigious Shipbuilding, Machinery and Marine Technology Trade Fair, an event providing companies from around the globe an opportunity to showcase their capabilities and seek fresh investment.

The frigate hosted a high-profile dinner for 18 of Germany's principal business leaders as well as Consul General Malcolm Scott and representatives from UK trade and industry.

The centrepiece of the visit was the official reception held onboard when Argyll, as the first Royal Navy vessel to bear the logo of the "Great" Britain campaign – a rather large flag adorning her aft superstructure.

She hosted the newly-appointed Minister for Business and Enterprise Michael Fallon MP and the UK's Ambassador to Germany, Simon McDonald, among a large and distinguished business and diplomatic guest list.

Guests were treated to a *Beat Retreat* performed by the Royal Logistic Corps band, the ship's guard took the minister's salute and ceremonial sunset was conducted in front of a hugely-impressed audience.

As well as the city's *Macher* – movers and shakers – Argyll also invited aboard ordinary Hamburgers with a traditional ship open to visitors to show what a T23 can do.

Meanwhile the ship's rugby and football teams successfully tested their skills against local opposition.

The visit to Hamburg brought to an end an extremely busy summer for the longest-serving Type 23 in the Royal Navy: 'flagship' of Britain's Armed Forces Day events in Plymouth; entertaining thousands of visitors in Zeebrugge for Belgium's Navy Days (it was very wet); and also providing essential training for future RN and foreign navigating officers.

Autumn is devoted to trials and tests and preparing for an intensive period of training under the guidance of Flag Officer Sea Training and his staff before Argyll deploys on operations again in 2013.

Pictures: Paul G Allen



Weather thwarts Hood bell raising

THEIR heads bowed in reverence, the crew of the Motor Yacht Octopus pay tribute to the 1,415 souls lost in the Royal Navy's greatest single tragedy in its history: the sinking of the Hood.

An historic attempt to recover the bell of the battle-cruiser was thwarted by difficult conditions above and below the surface of the Denmark Strait – for this year at any rate.

Instead, the team behind the abortive salvage mission paused to remember those lost in May 1941, casting wreathes into the Atlantic under leaden, rain-filled skies.

The bell was among the most obvious reminders of the mighty Hood to stand out from the murk when the wreck of the warship was found in more than 2,800m (9,300ft) of water a decade ago.

Eleven years on and Microsoft founder and philanthropist Paul G Allen funded the mission to recover the bell, which was thrown clear of the hull as Hood sank.

The bell lies some distance from the wreck, amid other debris, and possibly lies on the upturned floor of the admiral's cabin – as can be seen in the still from the video feed from the robot submarine sent down to recover it.

The goal was to raise the bell so it could act as a permanent memorial to the ship and all who served in her. The delicate operation had the full backing of today's Royal Navy and the battle-cruiser's association, including veterans who served in her before the disaster.

"I was honoured to be involved in this project, and I stand ready to help the Royal Navy try again in the future," said Mr Allen.

"Recovering this bell is a way to commemorate the hundreds of brave sailors who were lost at sea, and I want to see it through."

He called on the expertise of the team who located the wreck of the Hood back in 2001: deep



sea explorer David Mearns and his colleagues at Blue Water Recoveries.

"While hugely-challenging conditions precluded a successful recovery of HMS Hood's bell on this occasion, the Hood Association continues to hope that another attempt will be made at some stage in the next year or so," said association president Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks, whose uncle was among those killed when the battle-cruiser blew up in battle with the Bismarck.



"Our objective remains the provision of a unique memorial in the National Museum of the Royal Navy for this iconic warship and her gallant crew.

"We are extremely grateful to Mr Allen and Mr Mearns and for the professionalism of the Captain and crew of the Octopus for their outstanding assistance on this occasion."

It took a robot submarine more than two and a half hours to reach the location of the bell, which is around 45cm (18in) tall

and was originally mounted on a high wooden stand which was kept on the warship's quarterdeck in harbour and typically outside the captain's quarters when at sea.

It was sounded by a Royal Marine to mark daily routine and watches on board, but would also be struck in the event of fire or other calamity aboard.

"The high-definition video showed the bell was in excellent condition and thus another year or so on the seabed will cause it no harm," Mr Mearns said.

"Despite our limited dive time we were able to relocate the bell relatively quickly and confirm that the remotely-operated vehicle's manipulator arms were able to physically reach it in order to attach recovery tools.

"This information will be vitally important in planning a future recovery attempt. The location of the bell, and decoration on its rim, strongly indicates that it is Hood's main bell as we had expected and hoped."

If recovered, the bell will form a major feature of a new exhibition dedicated to the 20th and 21st Century Navy which is due to open at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard in 2014 – a fitting location as Hood was based in the city.



Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron, RNAS Yeovilton

'Old girl' brightens up Heron

THERE'S an "old girl looking good" and enjoying pride of place at the heart of Yeovilton air station. Restored to her Jungle glory outside the headquarters of HMS Heron in Somerset is Wessex XT458, veteran of commando training and operations for nearly 20 years.

To mark that long association with the Royal Marines' aerial arm, the decommissioned helicopter has been returned to her distinctive mid-70s livery – Jungle green – to act as a 'gate guardian' or 'sentinel' and, more importantly, a reminder of Fleet Air Arm heritage.

The last Wessexes flew with the Royal Navy in 1988, bringing the curtain down on a 28-year flying career. Two dozen years after those final flights, there remain

a few Wessex veterans still in the Fleet Air Arm, including Cdr Rick Fox, a pilot with 848 NAS, and aircrewman CPO John Fagan, who serves on the CHF staff at Yeovilton.

"It was great working in the Wessex 5," said John, who flew on search and rescue missions in XT458 with 772 NAS from Portland in the mid-80s.

"We'd work a crew of three: one pilot, two aircrewmen. As an aircrewman you had a major role, whether as the winchman or search and rescue diver on the end of the wire.

"It's great to see the old girl looking so good and given pride of place front and centre at Yeovilton."

Cdr Fox, who flew Wessex helicopters with 845 NAS in the

Falklands in 1982, added: "For a pilot the Wessex 5 was an absolute pleasure to fly – reliable in all environments and built to last. You most definitely felt like you were in control of a powerful stallion that required respect and returned the favour.

"It was built to withstand landing on rough and hostile terrain and immensely powerful, you started your flight by climbing up the outside of the aircraft to strap in to the pilot's seat."

XT458 was a Wessex HU5 (Helicopter Utility Mk5) and rolled off the production line at the Westland works in nearby Yeovil in 1965.

It served with 707 Naval Air Squadron, an advanced training unit for pilots and commando fliers, first at Culdrose, then at

Yeovilton from 1972.

Once in Somerset, the Wessex was assigned to front-line commando squadrons 845 and 846, before Sea Kings replaced Wessexes and the venerable helicopter was transferred to search and rescue duties for the final six years of her life.

After clocking up 6,212 flying hours (that's more than eight whole months airborne), XT458 saw out her days first at HMS Daedalus in Lee-on-the-Solent and finally at HMS Sultan in Gosport where she was "poked and prodded" by budding air engineers.

When Sultan decided the Wessex was no longer needed, Yeovilton stepped in and offered to restore her... which its team has now done.

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Tattoo glory

MORE than 210,000 people – and a global TV audience estimated at 100 million – saw the Royal Navy's No.1 musicians (among other performers) at the sell-out Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The Band of HM Royal Marines led the Senior Service's input at the 24-night show which this year celebrated the Queen's 60-year reign.

This event was the 63rd Edinburgh Military Tattoo – a sell-out on each of its 24 performances for the 14th year running.

The 2011 event was a heavily naval and maritime affair. In 2012 the theme was the

Diamond Jubilee, with performers from across the Commonwealth (and many from outside) converging on the grounds of Edinburgh Castle.

In all, nearly 1000 performers – musicians, pipers, drummers, singers and dancers – took part in the tattoo, which drew to a close with all 215,100 tickets sold (seven out of every ten of them to non-Scots).

The Senior Service input in 2012 was led by the Band of HM Royal Marines, who joined their counterparts from the Army and RAF to form a combined band for part of proceedings.

Also appearing on the floodlit esplanade in front of the capital's world-famous castle were bands and performers from Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, as well as elements from further afield.

Three high-ranking naval officers –

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Charles Montgomery, the senior naval officer in Scotland, Rear Admiral Chris Hockley, and the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham – took the salute on various nights of the tattoo, as did the Chaplain of the Fleet, the Rev Scott Brown.

In addition, Admiral Hockley, together with the naval regional commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, Capt Chris Smith, hosted receptions for invited guests on board fishery protection ship HMS Tyne, which was berthed in nearby Leith for some of the tattoo.

If you weren't able to attend the tattoo, or missed the BBC's highlights show in August, event organisers are already compiling the 2012 DVD featuring the full 90-minute show. It's available from mid October at www.edintattoo.co.uk/acatalog/2012_Tattoo_DVD.html

Pictures: PO(Phot) Ian Arthur, RNR Air Branch



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An Audacious cover-up

ALL the recent kerfuffle over royal personages and a shortage of clothing brought into focus the different rules governing the media in the UK and beyond the shoreline of this sceptred isle.

It is not, however, an issue entirely of the internet age's making.

A century ago the British media colluded with the Government to cover up the loss of super-dreadnought HMS Audacious, among the newest leviathans in the Grand Fleet... but the rest of the world's media were not so reticent.

Just 14 months as a commissioned warship, Audacious departed Lough Swilly, serving as a wartime anchorage, for gunnery practice on the range in company with six other 'castles of steel' in the mighty 2nd Battle Squadron.

By 8.45am on October 27 1914 the dreadnoughts were almost ready to clear their throats and began to turn in choppy seas when Audacious was rocked by an explosion on her port side.

Convinced the battleship had been torpedoed, the rest of the squadron departed – it had no intention of repeating the Hogue, Aboukir and Cressy tragedy of a month earlier.

In fact, Audacious fell victim to a German mine laid not a week earlier by a hurriedly-converted former liner. The Berlin had slipped through the British blockade and broken out into the Atlantic, charged with sowing her deadly seeds in the Firth of Clyde.

Entering the Irish Sea seemed to be a suicide run; the waters off Tory Island off the north coast of Ireland – on the Atlantic 'highway' from Liverpool to the New World – looked more inviting.

Berlin laid some 200 'eggs', which claimed their first victim, the merchantman Manchester Commerce, the day before the battle squadron sailed. News of



Picture: US Library of Congress

the loss had yet to reach the Admiralty, which never suspected a minefield so far west.

None of which helped Audacious, now listing ten degrees to port with the water spreading through the warship's engine compartments.

Some two hours after the mine explosion, as the ship sluggishly made for land in the hope of beaching her, the engines failed.

The last hope was towing. And here help was offered by RMS Olympic – sister of the ill-starred Titanic – bound for Liverpool. While the liner's crew sought to save the leviathan, her passengers took photographs of the drama –

even film footage.

The efforts of the crew were in vain. In rough seas, the tow line parted. Salvage attempts by other vessels, including cruiser HMS Liverpool, proved no more successful.

By nightfall, the water was over the forecabin and quarterdeck, causing Audacious to capsize.

She remained afloat for another 45 minutes until she was rocked by a series of explosions, sending shards of metal spiralling through the night, killing a senior rate on the Liverpool watching proceedings – the only man killed in the sinking.

With that, Audacious was gone

– she lies 200ft down a dozen miles off the coast of Eire, upturned, her hull ripped apart.

The Olympic was held in Lough Swilly for several days – all aboard were banned from communicating with the shore. There was little the British authorities could do when the liner made the return journey, however – and images of the struggle to save the stricken battleship were widely published beyond the Empire such that Berlin knew the ship was lost by mid-November 1914.

For four years the British media kept *schtum*, however, about the only British dreadnought lost to enemy action in WW1 (HMS

Vanguard blew up at Scapa Flow; the RN's other capital ship losses were either battle-cruisers or pre-dreadnoughts).

Indeed they went so far as to publicise Audacious' 'movements' and kept her on the Grand Fleet's order of battle – deception which earned praise from their Lordships who were delighted that "the Press loyally refrained" from aiding the enemy.

Three days after the guns fell silent on the Western Front, the Admiralty admitted Audacious' loss in what it called "a delayed announcement".

The Audacious name reappeared in naval lists in 1942



First of June..... 1794
Nile 1798
Gut of Gibraltar..... 1801

Class: King George V-class super-dreadnought
Builder: Cammell Laird, Birkenhead
Cost: £1.9m (about £1.2bn today)
Laid down: March 1911
Launched: September 14, 1912
Commissioned: August 1913
Displacement: 23,400 tons
Length: 598ft (182.3m)
Beam: 89ft (27.1m)
Draught: 28ft (8.5m)
Speed: 21 knots
Complement: 860
Propulsion: 18 Yarrow boilers powering Parsons direct-drive turbines and four propeller
Armament: 10 x 13.5in in five turrets; 12 x 4in Mk VII guns; 3 x 21in torpedo tubes
Armour: 12in (main belt); 8-9in (upper belt); 3-10in (barbettes); 3-11in (turrets); 1-4in (decks)

Battle Honours
Facts and figures

as the eponymous aircraft carrier – only to be renamed HMS Eagle before her launch in 1946.

The title was only resurrected six decades later with the fourth of the Astute-class submarines which is now three and a half years into construction at Barrow.



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

IN the age of iron and steel, no-one would rashly proclaim a ship indestructible.

Even the 'unsinkable' Titanic was only 'practically unsinkable'.

But here, aground at Prussia Cove in Cornwall, is the greatest ship ever to fly the White Ensign.

Our dip into the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum this month takes us to the spring of 1947 and the impressive sight of HMS Warspite steadfastly refusing to go to the breaker's yard in Faslane.

And well she might defy the steelcutters, for she defied the Germans and Italians repeatedly in a career spanning two global conflicts.

No individual warship ever attained more battle-honours than this super-dreadnought – 15 in all: Jutland (1916), Atlantic (1939), Narvik (1940), Norway (1940), Calabria (1940), Mediterranean (1940-43), Malta Convoys (1941), Matapan (1941), Crete (1941), Sicily (1943), Salerno (1943), English Channel (1944), Normandy (1944), Walcheren (1944), Biscay (1944).

And yet none appeared on an official honours board until the name was resurrected with the advent of the hunter-killer nuclear submarine in the mid-60s (which, ironically, earned none given her stealthy Cold War mission).

Battle honours were only formally instituted by the Admiralty 58 years ago this month – Order 2565/54, introduced to foster an *esprit de corps* and understanding of history.

The honours begin with the Armada – the earliest naval action for which there was sufficient documentation (although it pre-dates the Royal Navy being known as such) – and ends with Al Faw 2003 (no honours have yet been awarded for the decade-long mission in Afghanistan).

The criteria laid down by the Battle Honours Committee – the head of the Naval Historical Branch plus a senior officer from the staff of the Second Sea Lord – to merit an award included:

sinking enemy merchantmen in an escorted convoy;
clashes with enemy warship(s);
operations which thwarted the enemy's intentions.

The key criterion was success; there would be no battle honour for a defeat – or an action which was badly fought.

There are not a few anomalies, however... Hood's sole battle honour is her brief, disastrous clash with the Bismarck; her 'chaperone' Prince of Wales was honoured for the same action, but not for her valiant but forlorn struggle off Malaya in December 1941. HMS Indefatigable did little more than blow up at Jutland, but she was honoured (so too her fellow ill-starred battle-cruisers that day, Queen Mary and Invincible).

As for the much-lauded Warspite, she could not defy the breakers indefinitely. There were repeated attempts to re-float her over a five-year period, all largely unsuccessful.

By the summer of 1950 she had beached off St Michael's Mount and what was left of the great battleship was dismantled over the coming five years.

■ THIS photograph (FL 22686) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



Fortune favours the aged

NOW here's a magnificent and rare sight in the Scottish firmament in the summer of 2012.

Blue skies.
And a vintage Fleet Air Arm Swordfish torpedo bomber taking part in a fly-past with a present-day search and rescue Sea King from HMS Gannet.

The two naval aircraft took to the skies at East Fortune, a couple of dozen miles east of the Scottish capital, one of the oldest naval air stations in the country and today home to Scotland's National Museum of Flight.

The event was blessed with (a) 11,000 visitors and (b) inclement weather for at least part of the day, in keeping with the 'wonderful' summer we had.

The Swordfish is one of the veteran aircraft maintained by the RN Historic Flight – the Fleet Air Arm's counterpart of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight – as a permanent tribute to all naval aviators.

It made the 700-mile round trip from its home base in Yeovilton to take part in the show, the last before its mid-display-season overhaul.

It took four and a half hours for the lumbering bomber (top speed 139mph, but more typically it cruises along at about 120mph) to reach RAF Leuchars, on the other side of the Firth of Forth.

Heavy showers were forecast for the trip up – although on this occasion the meteorologists were slightly off and the flight passed without any major precipitation.

Nevertheless, after two hours in an open cockpit, even at the height of summer, the three-man crew were feeling a little battered by the elements, so they set down the aircraft at RAF Woodvale between Formby and Southport for a break.

The Swordfish's pilot, Lt Cdr Glenn Allison, (by day Commanding Officer of 727 NAS which assesses the learning potential of budding naval pilots) and Lt Rich Bell, an observer with front-line Lynx squadron 815 (where observers face forward in an enclosed cockpit not backwards in an open one...) both once served at Woodvale: Lt Cdr Allison as an instructor, Lt Bell flying with Liverpool University Air Squadron.

Refreshed, the crew continued to Leuchars to meet up with the RN Historic

Flight's other propeller-driven gem: the beautiful Sea Fury flown by Lt Cdr Chris Gotke who reached Fife considerably faster (and in more comfort) than the torpedo-bomber.

The airshow itself the next day was plagued by heavy showers, but those did not prevent either Swordfish or Sea Fury – the Navy's last piston-engined fighter – performing, particularly as the Fleet Air Arm was granted the privilege of closing the display.

The highlight was the joint Gannet-RNHF flypast, with White Ensign flown to the appreciative crowd.

Norm Webster, flight display director, said the joint fly-pasts the Gannet Sea King and LS326 conducted, were "an absolute joy" to watch.

Back at Leuchars, the team found Fleet Air Arm legend Lt Cdr 'Jock' Moffat waiting to have a chat. Jock is an ex-Swordfish pilot, famously credited with crippling the Bismarck courtesy of a torpedo hit on its rudder – allowing the big guns of the Home Fleet to finish off the pride of Hitler's Navy, and avenge the loss of the Hood in the process.

Seventy-one years later and Jock spent a couple of hours with the RN Historic Flight team – although he only had eyes for the Swordfish (despite the Red Arrows, who'd displayed over East Fortune and were also using the Fife airbase as a temporary billet, insisting on being noisy in the background).

On the journey back to Yeovilton the Swordfish made a point of flying past Sherburn-in-Elmet in North Yorkshire, where the biplane was built nearly 70 years ago.

Since her Scottish sojourn LS326 has undergone a mid-season overhaul (the Olympics largely brought air displays to a halt for much of August) and appeared at shows in Shoreham, Duxford, on the ground at the Goodwood Revival and was due to take part in the dedication of the Channel Dash memorial in Dover as Navy News went to press.

Picture: Berry Vissers/www.squadronprints.com



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● Duncan heads down the Clyde in the murk of a typical 2012 summer's day...



● ...and obscures much of Dumbarton Castle as she passes the iconic Dumbarton Rock... where it was slightly less murky...



● Circuits maximus... the ship's company work out on the flight deck, determined to retain their position as fittest in the Fleet

● Dawn for Duncan... The tug Battler heads up the Clyde to meet the destroyer and help her down river on her maiden voyage



Last of class... ...best of class

WHICH are not our words, but those of the 72 men and women of HMS Duncan.

That's the big grey thing coming right at you on the facing page, just in case you were wondering.

Determined to lay down the gauntlet from the outset, the final ship in the ten-year £6bn programme to bring the destroyer fleet into the 21st Century comes with a string of superlatives (some more subjective than others).

Last (undisputed). Quickest handover (launch-first entry into Portsmouth, two and a half years). Fittest (98 per cent of all aboard have passed their RN fitness test). Most Scottish (affiliated to Dundee, named for Scotland's greatest admiral – more about him in a mo). Best (her five sisters might dispute that...).

What's not disputed is that thanks to the trails blazed by her five sisters over the past five years (Daring sailed for the first time in July 2007 – yes it really is that long ago) mean that Duncan will be put through her trials in double time.

Barely a month will elapse between Duncan's first sea trials (which ended a few days ago) and her second stint at sea (the corresponding time frame for D32: seven months). If everything remains on track as it is at present, she'll be hoisting the White Ensign for the first time upon arrival in Portsmouth around Easter next year.

She's completed her propulsion trials – up to full speed in excess of 30kts, performing the Type 45's signature 'figure of eight' manoeuvre – loaded up with ammo at Glen Mallen on Loch Long, then headed to the Outer Hebrides to let rip (technical term) with all her guns from the 4.5in Kryten on the forecastle down to machine-guns.

The trials – conducted by a mixed RN and civilian crew – also saw her test her sensors and systems for the first time, before returning to BAE's yard at Scotstoun for further fitting out.

Once that's done there's a more rigorous test of her combat systems and sensors during the second sea trials.

And it's not just Duncan's steel and computer wizardry which has been given a thorough workout this autumn.

Only one day after departing Scotstoun on her maiden voyage, Duncan's leading physical training instructor was running the first circuit training sessions both on the expansive flight deck and in the more sheltered environment of Duncan's rather large hangar.

"I'm really proud for Duncan to lead the Fleet table with 98 per cent of us in-date for our RN fitness test. These circuits, the first on board, were really tough to keep us at the standard I expect," said LPT Curtis Fleming.

"However, I cannot believe that the navigator has just beaten me at ping-pong despite him being on-watch all night and me in my bunk!"

And we cannot believe they're playing table tennis at sea. Next they'll be installing snooker tables...

Anyway, with Duncan now back alongside



on the Clyde, the fitness challenges go on: PO 'Wiggy' Bennett is looking for his next test after completing the Iron Man challenge; CPO Jack McKinstry and PO Dougie Lunt should have just crossed the finish line in the Loch Ness marathon; meanwhile CPO Emma Powell is steeling herself for the Great South Run in Portsmouth and Wtr Megan Ryan the Great Scottish Run.

A ten-strong team including WO2 Robbie Robson, CPO George McCormick, PO Lunt, Wtr Ryan, PO 'Hammy' Hammond, PO George Young and LET 'Paxo' Paxton has also entered the 'Survival of the Fittest' – an endurance event featuring lots of mud, water, climbing and some 70 obstacles to overcome.

As well as keeping Duncan's men and women fighting fit they'll also boost the coffers of several worthy causes: the ship's charity, the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice; the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity; and Macmillan Nurses.

The growing ship's company have also taken the time to begin nurturing relations with her affiliates: visits by sailors to the two cities with which she is bound (Belfast and Dundee), made donations to the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice and helped out in its 'quiet garden', used as a place of reflection by the families.

Back in Scotland, D37 provided a marching platoon at a (hideously wet) Armed Forces Day in Dundee.

The warrant officers and senior rates officially opened their mess by arranging a fantastic formal dinner at Ibrox Stadium, with weapon engineer officer (and the ranking officer aboard) Cdr Phil Game and his marine engineer counterpart Cdr Stuart Henderson as guests.

Rather less formal affairs – 'charity messy breakfast baps', horse racing, cake baking,

quiz nights and the like – have raised more than £1,000 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

NOW a dozen or so years ago when the ships' names committee picked out some good tubthumping, swash and buckle titles for the new generation of destroyers.

Daring (bold, brave); Dauntless (fearless); Diamond (glittering, hardest natural substance); Dragon (really quite scary fire-breathing mythical beast); Defender (steadfast, resolute, think Terry Butcher wearing a bloodied headband); and Duncan (some bloke).

Well, yes, if it were any old Duncan. But it's not.

As well as being a fine Scottish moniker (a clan name, the king bumped off by Macbeth and the formidable *Dragon's Den* entrepreneur), it's the name of arguably the greatest mariner from north of the border: Admiral Lord Viscount Adam Duncan – whose portrait adorns this page.

The Dundonian (hence the current ship's affiliation with the city) was a giant of a man at 6ft 4in with a muscular frame. He was known as a kind-hearted, modest and religious gentleman, with a gritty determination and an impetuous streak.

Oh and he whipped the Dutch. Decisively. That was the culmination of a career spanning half a century and 50 battles.

The battle of Camperdown in 1797 has rather been overshadowed by the triumphs of the slightly younger Nelson (Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar).

When a Dutch force threatened sailed to join forces with the French and invade Ireland, Duncan and his ships were dispatched from Great Yarmouth to intercept.

The admiral adopted the revolutionary tactic of attacking the Dutch head-on in two groups with the aim of breaking their line – in many ways presaging the Nelson's tactics at Trafalgar eight years later.

And how it paid off. After three hours' battle, nine of the 16 Dutch ships of the line were in British hands; not a single Royal Navy ship was lost.

At the time Camperdown – an Anglicised version of the Kamperduin, the Dutch village closest to the scene of battle – was regarded as the most complete naval victory ever scored over an equal force.

Fame and fortune followed for Duncan and, upon his death in 1804, the first of seven ships to bear his name was ordered – a line which continued up to the Type 14 frigate which served under the White Ensign from 1957-85.

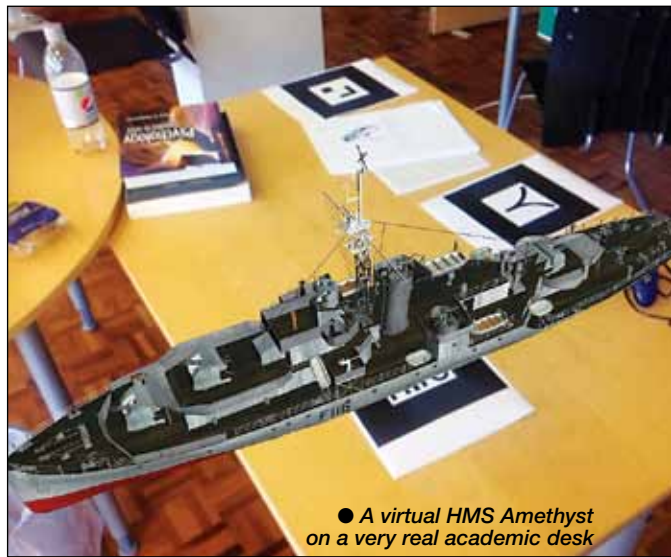
"I think our namesake Admiral Duncan would be proud of what we as a ship's company have achieved so far as we bring our ship to life," says Cdr Game.

"Everyone involved in the building of Duncan can also be justly proud.

"It's been an amazing experience: I was the first person to join her. I saw her when she was just a shell and now we've been to sea, being thrown around a bit!"

Which must make playing ping-pong very tricky indeed...





● A virtual HMS Amethyst on a very real academic desk



● The computer-modelled HMS Amethyst makes another journey along the river Tamar

From desktop to dock

A LONG unseen sight was recreated in a link between reality and the virtual, when HMS Amethyst headed once more along the river Tamar in 2012. The well-known ship was broken up in Sutton Harbour in 1957, but by wonders of the virtual world she has been restored by Professor Bob Stone and his team of scientists and engineers at the University of Birmingham.

When first we featured Prof Stone in these pages, it was in context of a virtual submarine built in games-based technology that allowed its users to explore and understand the safety systems on board.

The Amethyst project was designed to bring to life the ship's final moments in Devon – a 1,350-ton, 238ft frigate lying silent in a harbour more used to fishing trawlers and sailing boats.

So why have he and his team turned to resurrecting old ships at existing locations, or mapping out the Wembury Bay docks of 1909 that were planned and never built?

"Although these trials focused on an example of Virtual Naval Heritage, the real reason for undertaking this Augmented Reality research is to establish how mature and usable the technology actually is," said Prof Stone.

"At a time when there is growing interest throughout the MOD in looking at how augmented reality (AR) could (it is claimed) revolutionise some forms of defence training, we need to understand what the technology is and isn't capable of, especially when deployed in the field.

"In the recent past, certain branches of the Armed Forces have witnessed first-hand the problems brought about by adopting unproven high-tech training 'solutions' far too early.

"Without a sound understanding of the key human factors issues – usability, appropriate content design, appropriate interaction technologies, and so on – it is all too easy to become a victim of 'technology push' (also referred to as the 'wow factor').

"The result of this, more often than not, is that significant subsequent expense is required to 'make the technology right', or it is discarded and simply fades into oblivion, leaving what could have been a successful and inspired end-user community more sceptical than ever before of technology-based training solutions.

"It is also important to remember that AR is not new – the technology was first demonstrated in an external environment in Australia in 2002 using a popular computer game (Quake), together with some very cumbersome wearable computing, GPS and head-mounted display equipment.

"However, whilst AR hardware components have shared an evolutionary path with their Virtual Reality counterparts, the same cannot be said of AR software.

"It is certainly possible today to use head-mounted displays for AR applications, but we have avoided doing so, because of the human factors problems with most, if not all, commercially-available products (and these concerns persist, even with the promise of new wearable displays to hit the market later in 2012).

"Instead, we decided to start by using a highly portable tablet computer solution based on the iPad3."

However out in the field around Plymouth the use of this readily-available system did create its own problems, where the team were hampered by the intervention of the Devon rain and the local wildlife (a large flock of swans).

Prof Stone explained: "What we found during the HMS Amethyst trial, and with subsequent projects addressing much larger 3D objects and sites, is that the current generation of iPad technologies are unsuitable for large-scale training applications that require accurate and stable registration between virtual and real images.

"Important issues included a poor frame rate (with much larger 3D models than the Amethyst, the frame rate would have rendered the system unusable) and limitations of the iPad's integral camera, especially with regard to the device's resolution and autofocus, the quality of both of which meant that distant features could not be relied upon as markers to frame the 3D Amethyst model.

"Also, the AR software we were evaluating, a commercial product called ARToolkit, whilst reasonably impressive in the comfort of the scientific laboratory, did not (in its current form) perform satisfactorily in the real-world scenarios.

"The natural feature tracking capabilities of the software did not reliably recognise natural (or man-made) features under quite a narrow range of environmental and weather conditions.

"Coupled with the limitations of the iPad camera, this forced the team to revert to using so-called fiducial markers – printed symbols mounted onto boards and placed within the computer camera's near field of view, thereby triggering the appearance of the virtual images on the tablet display.

"We also had to develop our own graphical user interface (GUI), which enabled us to manipulate the virtual model of the Amethyst when displayed within the real-world scene.

"We needed to be able to change – in real time – the position and orientation, scale and ambient lighting of the virtual ship, so that it would at least look as if it matched the real-world context into which it was being inserted.

"Without this piece of software, the project would have undoubtedly failed."

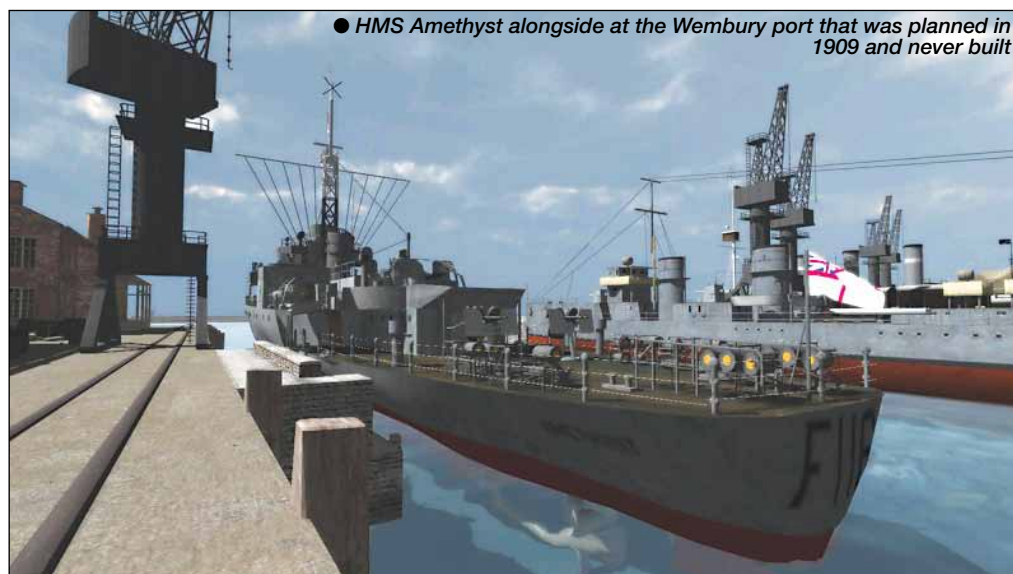
This is only one of the many Naval projects that Prof Stone and his team have underway in Birmingham, which include augmented reality models of HMS Astute and the wreck of HMS Scylla.

Prof Stone, one of only four people to be awarded a commendation last year by the MOD's Chief Scientific Adviser, is an expert in interactive multimedia systems at the School of Electronic, Electrical and Computer Engineering at the university, and was Research Director of the UK Human Factors Integration Defence Technology Centre for six years.

The senior academic holds unique expertise in the realms of altered realities for Naval ships and boats.



● A VR recreation of the failed 1909 Proposal for a Maritime Port in Wembury Bay



● HMS Amethyst alongside at the Wembury port that was planned in 1909 and never built



Professor Bob Stone was invited to attend the recent Amethyst Association reunion. He writes: "What can I say? A very humbling and unbelievable evening, with the 1949 surviving crew (not to mention others pre- and post- that era) pledging to help get us further data and images for future developments. I also spoke with families and friends who would like to explore ways in which we can use the Virtual and Augmented Amethyst models as a means of presenting the immense amount of material they have (and will have – such as video interviews with the crew members). Truly an unbelievably inspiring evening – I was also presented with a print of the Amethyst transiting the Yangtze and each of the crew signed the back. In the photo, I even got to hold the ship's cap with the ship's cat!"

NAVY NEWS

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Date	Remarks
1/7/12	Installed



Date	Remarks
8/8/12	Sorted



Can we fix it?

YES we can...

A specialist Navy engineering team has clocked up six years keeping all British military helicopters in Afghanistan – that's RAF and Army Air Corps as well as the RN's own Fleet Air Arm – in working order for their vital mission.

A five-strong team from 1710 Naval Air Squadron – who were known as the Mobile Aircraft Support Unit, or MASU, when they began in Helmand back in 2006 – are based at Camp Bastion, the hub of the British effort in the country.

It's not the task of the 1710 detachment to look after helicopters on a day-to-day basis. But they are called upon to carry out complex repairs to whirlybirds damaged by emergency/rough landings and serious wear-and-tear or, to a lesser degree, enemy fire.

That means that although the team is based at Bastion it's trained – and called upon – to work 'outside the wire' with its equipment, carrying out a range of repairs from rapid battle damage to allow a mission to be completed, to a full repair which will last the lifetime of an aircraft.

The repair detachment currently comprises Lt Andy Betts, CPOs Tony Fisher and Phil Roberts and POs Simon Whittell and Liam Sutherland, all of whom can call upon a wealth of experience in the aircraft maintenance world and do three-month stints at a time in Afghanistan.

Tony and Simon previously maintained Naval Strike Wing when Harriers deployed to Kandahar; with the demise of the fabled jump jets, they re-trained to look after helicopters.

"Although we've been to theatre before, this time our role is very different," explained 38-year-old Tony who hails from Peterborough.

"Where before we were busy maintaining aircraft as part of a large squadron, this time around we're part of a small team and have to remain very reactive to all forms of damage across the three Services."

Senior repair co-ordinator CPO Roberts adds: "It's hard work, very challenging, long hard days, but very rewarding too."

'All forms of aircraft' includes Army Apache gunships and battlefield Lynx (and the RN's own 847 NAS is due to deploy flying the same helicopter), Fleet Air Arm 'bagger' Sea Kings which provide eyes in the skies for Allied ground forces, and RAF Chinooks and Merlins.

Damage to a Chinook's undercarriage is likely to damage the fuselage – a repair can require 500 man hours, the equivalent of three weeks' work.

As for an Apache, it can take a week to remove all the kit and additions to the airframe before the 1710 team can get to work on structural repairs... and then another week to put it back together again.

And it's all got to be carried out in challenging conditions: ankle-deep mud in the winter, temperatures of 45°C at the height of summer (tools must be kept in buckets of water to keep them cool, while the metal in airframes expands by day and contracts during the cool nights and there's fine dust like talcum powder everywhere).

A Merlin might require a state-of-the-art composite repair, while a Sea King can be fixed with a more traditional sheet metal repair.

"Since coming to theatre, we've carried out repairs to some aircraft we hardly

ever see in the UK," said 27-year-old PO Sutherland, from Thurso. "I'm looking forward to using my knowledge to help less experienced members of the squadron get ready for their Afghanistan tours – after some post-operational leave, of course."

Lt Betts said that squadron personnel had noticed definite changes during the six years 1710 and its forebear had been in Afghanistan.

"We can see that in the frequency and type of damage we are being asked to repair," he explained. "A few years ago it would have been mainly damage due to enemy action, the majority of work we are now

seeing is down to aircraft fatigue and the difficulties of operating in the dusty Afghan environment."

This detachment is part of the wider 1710 NAS team which acts as the 'fourth emergency service' for all the UK Armed Forces rotary-wing aircraft around the globe.

In addition they increase capability by designing new kit that can be fitted to military helicopters, and also have a highly-specialised scientific team which helps to keep aircraft in the air, as well as providing forensic investigation expertise on aircraft accidents when required.



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VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

President at the Games

MORE than 30 members of London's Royal Naval Reserve unit put their jobs on hold to help provide security at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The reservists, based at HMS President close to Tower Bridge, were amongst the 300 or so Maritime Reservists nationally who mobilised alongside their Regular colleagues as part of Operation Olympics.

Cdr Eugene Morgan RNR, Commanding Officer of HMS President, said: "This has been a significant year for HMS President and our personnel."

"We were centre stage for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant and have played a key role supporting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games."

"It has been an absolute privilege to be in this position."

"We look forward to continuing the very full part we play in the life of the capital and to whatever challenges lie ahead."

Typical of that effort was the case of Sub Lt Claire Lamont, a solicitor with Eversheds LLP in Birmingham and London.

Claire was appointed a team leader at Greenwich Park, primarily responsible for the operation of two airport-style security lanes at the venue.

The setting was particularly appropriate, given the park's strong historical Naval connections.

Claire said: "I managed a team of ten people."

"Our roles were as wide-ranging as operating the security lanes to guarding the cross-country jumps in a thunderstorm while members of the public walked the course."

"I enjoyed being a part of the London Games and know that it was a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity."

● From left, Mid Zoe Williams, Lt Mark Shotter, Sub Lt Scott Smith, Lt Robert Coatbridge and Lt Cdr Roy Malkin RNR during celestial navigation training on board MV Anvil Point



Seeing stars

FOUR Royal Navy Young Officers and one RNR Old Officer spent part of a long passage south star-gazing – all part of ongoing military training.

The YO's joined strategic ro-ro (Roll-On, Roll-Off) vessel Anvil Point on a voyage from Marchwood

to Ascension Island to gain an insight into a lesser-known part of military logistics.

MV Anvil Point, under the command of Capt Kevin Foulkes MN, is a merchant ship – but that is only part of the story.

She is one of six 20,000-tonne ro-ro vessels built and operated by Foreland Shipping, a consortium

formed by British shipping lines Bibby Line, Houlder Hadley, James Fisher plc and Andrew Weir Shipping, for service with the MOD under a Private Finance Initiative.

The MoD agreed a structure with Foreland Shipping to allow some of these ships to be employed in the commercial market whilst ensuring they are always available in times of crisis.

Anvil Point is one of four of these ships which, although operated as merchant ships, are employed carrying cargos for the MOD to wherever the Armed Forces are deployed – on this occasion she was carrying cargo to Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands.

Each ship is registered in the UK and is manned by an 18-strong British crew, all members of the Sponsored Reserve List of the RNR, which means that if required in war or time of emergency the ships, with their crews could join the RN.

Anvil Point was the last ship to be built at Harland and Wolff's in Belfast, birthplace of the Titanic, and came into service in 2003

She was built to a variation of a successful standard commercial Flensburger Schiffbau design, and by using merchant navy standards wherever possible her building and operational costs are kept to a minimum.

The four YO's – Lts Mark Shotter and Robert Coatworth, Sub Lt Scott Smith and Mid Zoe Williams – were taking a gap from their initial warfare officer training on minor war vessels to conduct a Merchant Navy familiarisation voyage – and found the contrast between Anvil Point and their warships fascinating.

However, in addition to finding out about another form of seafaring, the YO's were taking the opportunity of the passage to hone their skills in celestial navigation and obtain their ocean navigation certificates.

For this purpose they were lucky to find the RNR Old Officer – 55-year-old Lt Cdr Roy Malkin

– on the same MN familiarisation voyage on his annual RNR training.

Roy is usually to be found working as a Babcock Instructor in HMS Collingwood – teaching celestial navigation.

Having first gone to sea in 1974 he learnt celestial navigation before satellite navigation became fashionable. His maritime career has included 24 years with the RFA, command of tall ships, service in the MN and finally 14 years with the RNR.

The 11-day passage was perhaps the ideal training voyage.

The ship sailed from Marchwood (latitude 51°N) to Ascension (latitude 7°S) which presented opportunities to take sights in many different weather conditions, including North Atlantic fronts, trade winds and tropical conditions.

At least one set of star sights was achieved every day, noon was visible on all but one day and a running sun fix was achieved every morning and afternoon throughout the voyage.

The ship's navigator 20 James Christie (Father Jack), assisted by 30 Phil Bent (Big Show), showed their skills achieving a daylight fix from the sun, moon, and Venus when none of the RN team could even see the planet.

The RN team did however manage to see that rare phenomena, the green flash whilst watching sun set at Ascension.

The voyage was not all work, however, and it gave the YO's the opportunity to 'cross the line' on a merchant ship.

Father Jack reappeared as the Prosecutor and Big Show became Aphrodite when they were joined by Std 'Ollie' Cohn as Neptune for the usual equatorial capers.

All of the YO's were captured by Neptune's Police before being tried for a variety of crimes including being just too smart.

They were then suitably punished by the ship's crew – they were 'shaved', christened with slops and rinsed down with a fire hose after taking their medicine.

MV Anvil Point

MV ANVIL Point is 193 metres long, has a beam of 26 metres and a draught of 7.5 metres.

With a displacement of over 20,000 tons, she has 2,650 lane metres of vehicle space – more than twice that of a Bay-class Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) or six times that of an Albion-class Landing Platform Dock.

That enables a Point-class ship to take the full range of military equipment up to and including Challenger 2 main battle tanks or a mixed Ro-Ro, container and general cargo. That means Anvil Point can carry 130 armoured vehicles in addition to 60 trucks and associated ammunition.

Her two MAK main engines produce over 16MW of power, giving her service speed in excess of 18 knots and a range of well over 8,000 nautical miles – she can steam to the Falklands without the need to refuel.

Please no unsolicited presents

GENEROUS members of the public are being urged not to deluge the military with unsolicited gifts and presents in the run-up to Christmas.

In the world of military mail – British Forces Post Office, typically abbreviated to BFPO – rather like the High Street, Christmas begins in October.

Mail dispatched to ships, squadrons and Royal Marines on the front-line increases by around a third in the three months leading to December 25.

By November, BFPO will be dispatching 800 sacks of mail a day from its headquarters at RAF Northolt to Afghanistan, while around 11 tonnes of post will be shipped to Royal Navy and RFA vessels over the month.

A dozen warships, plus supporting Fleet Air Arm squadrons and flights will be deployed over the Yuletide, not to mention the 600-plus men and women of 40 Commando in Afghanistan.

With just two months to go till the 'last Christmas post' deadline, Service chiefs have reiterated their annual plea not to send unsolicited parcels and presents, however well intentioned – a deluge of gifts from the public means presents from families and friends might not reach their intended recipients in time.

For members of the public who'd like to show their support for deployed personnel, they can make a donation to the charity uk4u-Thanks! (www.uk4u.org) which provides a Christmas box for every soldier, sailor and airman deployed overseas – in Afghanistan and elsewhere – and those in hospital and recovery centres. Its parcels are delivered via the supply chain, meaning there is no impact on the mail network.

Alternatively send a cheque to the Operational Welfare Fund which the MOD runs to provide goodies for troops in Afghanistan – such as DVDs, games consoles, table tennis sets – via

Operations Welfare Fund
J1 Operation Herrick
PJHQ, Sandy Lane,
Northwood, Middlesex,
HA6 3HP

As for solicited mail, this year's last posting dates for RN/RM/RFA personnel on operations are:

Overseas (Afghanistan, Gulf, Indian Ocean, Falklands etc)
– November 30
Ships in home waters –
December 18 (2nd class),
December 20 (1st class)

Further details are available from the BFPO enquiries team on 020 8589 3450.

Chatham project funds

THE Historic Dockyard Chatham has received initial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards a new project.

At the heart of the £8.4m Command of the Oceans project will be the 'ship beneath the floor', which focuses on the conservation and preservation of the remains of second rate ship of the line HMS Namur, which has important associations with 18th and early 19th century people and events.

The project will become the gateway to Chatham's naval and military heritage, reconnecting some of the site's earliest features including the North and South Mast Ponds (constructed in 1696 and 1702), the adjacent Mast Houses and Mould Loft and the Wheelwright Shop, beneath which the timbers of Namur were found.

Initial funding, of just over £116,000, means the HLF believes the project shows significant promise, and helps the Dockyard develop the project further to meet more specific criteria in later stages of the application process.

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Sign up from just £5 a month to help support your charity and be in with the chance to win £1000 for your ship, submarine, unit or establishment.



First person: LMA Arron French helps the RNRMC

Leading Medical Assistant (Submariner) Arron French is currently working as an instructor at HMS Sultan.

He has volunteered for various charitable organisations over a number of years and explains why he is now concentrating his efforts on helping the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"I think it's important for Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel to just give a little time to raise money and awareness for the RNRMC; our charity does so much for us and volunteering helps us give something back.

"So far I have helped out at Sultan Show, Fort Nelson Tattoo and various Families' Days and am looking forward to helping at British Military Tournament.

"I do anything from helping put up gazebo's and selling merchandise, to giving out fliers and bucket collections!

"It's good fun being part of the team and we have lots of laughs.

"Most of all I really enjoy talking to people we meet at events, from veterans and civilians to potential recruits.

"Making people aware of what a great job the charity does and raising some money for them really makes it worth while."

If you would like to get involved in volunteering for RNRMC please contact our fundraising team on 023 9254 8155 or fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk

Kings' kids at Temeraire

FOR a whole week, 57 children of service personnel enjoyed an action packed activity camp hosted by HMS Temeraire.

Organised through WO1 PT 'Tiny' Nash and the Kings Foundation, the Kings Camp catered for children from the age of five through to 17 with three different programmes on offer: Kids Camp, Teen Camp and Rookie Sports Leader Award.

All children participated in sports activities, arts and crafts, swimming, dancing and various team games.

There was also a series of themed days including an odd sock day, Wet Wednesday and Olympic Superstar day.

Having been involved with previous Kings Camps whilst based in HMNB Clyde, Tiny was asked by Kings if he would be able to introduce the Camps to the Portsmouth and Gosport area.

He said: "The answer was 'yes' straight away, having been fortunate to witness a fantastic camp in Scotland and seeing firsthand how much fun the children have had this week, it has been well worth all the planning."

The camp involved children from every establishment in Portsmouth and Gosport including a couple of ships from the Dockyard.

The young adults between the ages of 14 and 17 were able to complete the Rookie Sports Leaders Award in which they helped the staff organise and mentor the children.

"It has been a fantastic experience which has most certainly helped to boost my confidence in working with children in an environment I cherish," said 16-year-old Rookie Chris Penberthy.

"The Rookie programme has been really enjoyable and an opportunity to practise leadership and taking on new challenges," said Jonathan Williams, aged 14.

The younger ones enjoyed a variety of activities: "My favourite time has been swimming, dancing and playing frisby," said 8-year-old Shannon Fern.

Demi Armstrong (aged 7) said: "The week has been awesome and the swimming was definitely my favourite part."

Stephanie Williams said that she loved playing lots of different sports and meeting new friends.

The parents have also been extremely complimentary about the professionalism and friendliness of all the staff.

Mrs Neale said: "The camp is organised, efficient and more importantly is a safe and friendly environment."

"The staff were welcoming and fun, so much so that after the first day Thomas ran off to join in the activity without even saying goodbye!"

The Kings Camp has undoubtedly been a wonderful experience for all the children and a huge success for Service families in the Portsmouth and Gosport area and at £65 per child has been fantastic value for money.

The price has been subsidised thanks to the magnificent support



from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund and the Annington Trust.

"Without doubt had we not had the support from all three charities we would not have been able to charge such a fantastic price for the families; a massive thank you must go to the charities

for all their support," said Tiny.

It is hoped Kings Camp will return next year, maybe from other establishments within the Portsmouth and Gosport area, as well as HMS Temeraire.

To obtain further information on what is available from the camps, visit www.kingscamps.org.

Gala dinner at the Moorland

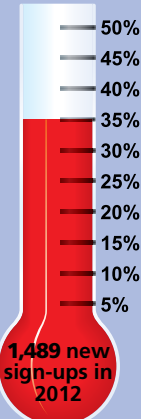
A gala dinner and auction held during Armed Forces Week raised £5837.55 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity. The evening, at the Moorland Garden Hotel at Yelverton near Plymouth, was organised by a team of volunteers headed up by Cdre Chris Steel (Ret'd) in conjunction with staff at the hotel.

Diners were entertained by a Beating Retreat and a Royal Marines string quartet. Guest speaker Cdre Jamie Miller regaled guests with amusing anecdotes together with his more sombre experiences of the Falklands conflict. Thank you to all who supported the event.



● Cdre and Mrs Steel, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth and Cdr and Mrs Charles Crichton

Understanding giving through pay



How do I know if I am paying in to the RNRMC via payroll giving?

If I had £1 for every time I was asked that question the

RNRMC would be a lot richer, so to help you understand those strange words you see on your pay statement, via the online version or hard copy, here is a short explanation:

Pay and Allowances	Value	Charges and Deductions	Value
Basic Pay	2896.09	PAYE	875.86
		NI D	212.12
		Service Charity Monthly (RN Charities)	5.00
		Paying into Payroll Giving	
		Service Charity Monthly (RN Charities)	4.33
		Paying the old SABS (Sports Amenities and Benevolence Scheme), renamed in 2010 to Payroll Giving	
		Service Charity Monthly (RN Charities)	1.00
		Paying into the Voluntary Sports Subscription Scheme	
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Help us to help you, and stop the confusion. Convert your old schemes to the new payroll giving scheme which now includes sport insurance. Payroll giving form is

available at www.rnrmc.org.uk.

For further guidance contact Dean Rogers on 93832 8417, dean.rogers@rnrmc.org.uk.

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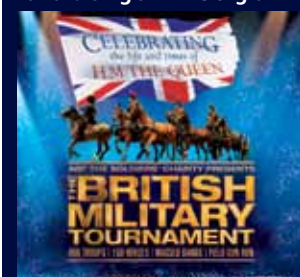
RNRMC mug: £5
www.rnrmc.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

GREAT SOUTH RUN

On October 28, the Bupa Great South Run takes place in Portsmouth: a ten-mile route winds through the Historic Dockyard and on to Portsmouth Cathedral and Spinnaker Tower.

There are still places available to run for the RNRMC. So grab your running shoes and contact: fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk



BRITISH MILITARY TOURNAMENT

THE British Military Tournament is a unique event celebrating the best of our Armed Forces have to offer. Taking place at Earls Court, London, on December 8 and 9, the British Military Tournament will build on the phenomenal success of its last two years.

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CONTACT US

Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity
Building 29, HMS Excellent
Whale Island
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO2 8ER
fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk

Join us on Facebook: search for 'Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity'

www.rnrmc.org.uk

WHAT is the connection between the most famous clock in the world, the Mother of Parliaments and the Naval Service?

Two men provide the answer – two men whose careers were formed by years serving under the White or Blue Ensigns, and who have used those experiences to forge new careers at the heart of the most important institution in Britain, *writes Mike Gray*.

Their seafaring professions took very different paths, but they both acknowledge how much they owe to the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary while working in the Palace of Westminster.

John Borley, for instance, can not only draw on many years of dealing with people at all levels, but also impressed recruiters in Parliament with a swift and efficient demolition of an in-tray...

John's Naval career began in 1974 when, as an acting midshipman, he joined commando carrier HMS Bulwark for a "wonderful" two-month Mediterranean deployment.

"It was a real life-forming experience for me, getting to know how sailors worked, how a ship worked, and how a seafaring community worked," said John.

"I had no money – I was quite rightly the lowest-paid member of the ship's company, as far as I was aware, and I was everybody's dogsbody – and I loved every minute of it."

He took up his deferred place to read natural sciences at Cambridge, and on returning to the Navy decided he would transfer from the Seaman (later Executive) Branch to engineering – by no means a common career path.

"I remember my training officer in HMS Fife almost levitating out of his seat, he was so amazed I could wish to do such a thing," said John.

He worked as a submarine weapon systems engineer, then as Military Assistant to the Chief of Defence Procurement.

"I saw then how the hierarchy of the military, the Government and industry worked together and related to each other," said John.

"One thing I did learn during my time both at sea and in procurement, was how very important the role of politicians was and is.

"While military decisions are made by military people, the important policy decisions in our country are, I am very pleased to say, made by elected representatives."

After commanding Clyde Naval Base, John's career ended as Flag Officer Training and Recruitment – both demanding roles which required skills equally desirable on Civvy Street, as John discovered when he saw the job of Director General Facilities at the House of Commons advertised in the *Sunday Times*.

"I am sure I can thank a lot of the experience and training the Navy gave me in securing this wonderful post I have here – and it is a wonderful job," he said.

"I think my engineering training and experience has helped, and at the risk of sounding awfully clichéd, the big thing the Navy taught me – and it just seems obvious when you know – is the importance of people.

"Submarines perhaps especially, but it is probably just as true of the Service as a whole – you realise how inter-reliant every member of the crew is, and it teaches the enormous importance of mutual respect.

"I learned to greatly admire the abilities and enthusiasm of everyone on the ships I was on and the sailors I met and knocked into and the people I was privileged to be in charge of – wonderful.

"The thing the Navy does superbly well is operate ships, and I am very proud that has been part of my life. The most important part of the ship is its people, and that's the key thing the Navy taught me, I think."

He continued: "In my last job as FOTR I got to know the Royal Marines better than I ever had done before, because Lympstone was part of my patch, and I greatly enjoyed and greatly valued understanding the psychology and the passion and the mindset the Royal Marines bring to their training and ethos.

"I wish there was a way of capturing the Royal Marines ethos and sharing it more widely."

The selection process for his present job brought out skills



● Mike McCann (left) and John Borley at the Palace of Westminster

Picture: Parliamentary Copyright

which had been forged in his Naval career.

"I had to have interviews and tests – one was an in-tray exercise where I had to work through an in tray," he said.

"I had an hour to do it, and they said 'we are not expecting you to complete it, not by a very long way – it is more of a question how you prioritise the things to do.'

"I did the whole lot in about 40 minutes and went for a walk, because it was much easier than my work as an admiral..."

John, a passionate supporter of equal opportunities throughout his Naval career, found his new employer to be a beacon of diversity.

"There are some absolutely terrific people working here. One of the great things about being in a ship is the common sense of purpose. It's the same here," he said.

"I have some wonderful, delightful, very talented colleagues and it really is a huge privilege to be part of this organisation."

John is responsible not just for the real estate of Parliament – both chambers in the Palace of Westminster, Portcullis House and several other buildings – but also for vital support services to the House of Commons such as catering and office cleaning.

"There is no specific Naval term that covers it all – but you could say I am the barrackmaster," he said.

Answering to the Chief Executive of the House of Commons – the Clerk of the House – John is a member of the House of Commons management board, and has a leading role in various programmes and projects.

One is modernising employment practices in the Lower House, another aims to converge 48 data and information networks to "a single, high-capacity, resilient, future-proofed system".

And the big one is the study into refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster, which could see Parliament relocated for several years as the mid-Victorian building is worked on.

"We are at the early stages of

trying to work out quite how to maintain the heritage of the Palace into the future, and no decisions have yet been taken," said John.

"We are working out how to provide Parliament and the Government with the information it needs in order to make balanced, informed decisions about the future upkeep of the Palace, bearing in mind it is an iconic, Grade 1 listed building, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and that is looming larger and larger in my in-tray.

"I am trying not to call it modernisation, because some aspects we don't want to modernise, so actually I think the programme should be called Palace renewal, which would give Parliament the scope to work out what it wants to modernise and what it wants to keep as it has been."

The heavy hand of heritage is also felt on the shoulder of Palace Maintenance Manager Mike McCann.

Mike looks after the 'front of house' infrastructure in the Palace – lighting, power, heating, television monitors... the kind of kit that can cause grief if it fails, and the grief would be directed at the former RFA engineer.

"The problem with our job is that it is only when things go wrong that people want you," said Mike.

"They don't phone you up and say 'Hey, everything's working, Mike, how are you?'

"No one thinks of the fact that everything has been working for the previous ten years, what they think is it has broken down now.

"Lifts are a classic example – I look after 100 lifts.

"When one breaks down, all hell lets loose. The fact it has been running 24/7 for years... but that's maintenance for you."

Mike's four years as a marine engineer cadet and four years in the RFA gave him plenty of warning – and plenty of good times and memorable voyages.

Mike hit the jackpot with his first trip – five months in the Far East with RFA Stromness in 1980.

"We flew out in our full

uniform, after two years at college, feeling quite grand, I have to say, walked on board the Stromness, and the Second Engineer said 'Right, get your uniforms off, get your boiler suits on – we are doing a scavenge clean, which is about the worst job you can get in the entire department,'" he said.

"So within an hour of arriving on board the ship I was sitting on top of a diesel, scraping carbon off the cylinders in temperatures of about 120 degrees.

"It's a horrible job, absolutely horrible job – and I think the Second did it on purpose to make you realise that marine engineering is a very very dirty, tough business."

Just days later Stromness was out in the wild seas thrown up by Typhoon Orchid, helping in the search for the doomed bulk carrier MV Derbyshire, the largest British ship ever lost at sea.

"I was sick every trip. I was not a good sailor, and that was horrible."

The sudden crisis of mechanical breakdown at sea was brought home on various deployments – an engine failure which gave engineers a four-hour window in which to fix the problem before the ship drifted into unfriendly waters and a diplomatic incident, for example, or an old amphibious ship blowing a cylinder and pumping sump oil all over the engine room mid-Atlantic.

From 1986 Mike built a career outside the RFA, starting as a hospital engineer and moving gradually through site engineering into facilities management.

In 1997 he answered an advert in *The Times* for House of Commons Maintenance Manager, and landed the job.

Strangely, the advert did not mention the element of the job that really makes people sit up and take note.

"It didn't mention the clock at all – that is only about one per cent of my job," said Mike.

But that one per cent bestows the title Keeper of the Great Clock – and Mike is responsible for ensuring the iconic clock keeps accurately chiming the hours.

"I say to people the clock is stuck on the end of my building, because if you think about it it hasn't really got anything to do with Parliament. It's not a functional part of Parliament," said Mike.

"The reason it was relevant, I suppose, is because the clock is just a series of large gears and bearings, which is effectively what marine steam turbine engineering is.

"The clock itself is just a mechanism – I am not a clock engineer – but at the time I was



● Rear Admiral John Borley, having just emerged from the DRIU (Damage Repair Instructional Unit) at Portsmouth in 2006

also looking after the main steam boilers in the Palace, so obviously that was very relevant."

"Even when I took over I didn't really appreciate the importance of the clock. The first time I really appreciated it, I suppose, was the Millennium – that was the first big thing after I started," said Mike, who is also responsible for the clock faces and the bells – including Big Ben itself.

"The clock was very much the focal point of the Millennium celebrations, and I was here on that night. That was quite exciting."

A major planned stoppage to attend to worn parts of the clock also put Mike on television screens around the world, as well as requiring some tricky decisions.

"We try not to replace anything because it is also a historical artefact," said Mike.

"We found a crack on one of the main wheels, and our first thought was to replace it, but if you keep doing that there will be nothing left. So we did a repair on it in the end and put it back into service.

"It's a tricky judgement call, but I think that is one of the things from being at sea – you are not afraid to make decisions.

"You can't stand around in a burning engine room waiting for someone else to make a decision – you get on with it.

"And obviously keep calm as well; when things go wrong you tend to react a bit more calmly.

"The job itself is very satisfying. As I always say, there are worse problems at sea. I know because I have seen them..."

Mike's role as a manager means he does not get the chance to wield a spanner as often as he used to, but he still makes the trip up the clock tower – renamed the Elizabeth Tower last month to honour the Queen's Diamond Jubilee – every couple of weeks.

But the Great Clock requires plenty of attention, and a team of three engineers are aloft every

couple of days, as well as tending to another 2,200 timepieces around the Palace, 200 of them antique.

There is a certain emotional attachment to the machine, Mike admitted.

"I remember when we took the Regent into refit in Newcastle. I had been on the ship five months, and I remember when the last thing was switched off there wasn't a single noise in the engine room.

"You don't realise how much that noise is part of your life, and to have absolute silence in a ship's engine room is really quite spooky.

"It was similar with Big Ben. In that major refit we actually took away two thirds of the clock.

"There is no manual. There are no instructions on what you are doing.

"I thought 'I hope we can put this back together, because there is no one else to ask.'

"We loaded it on the back of a truck and hoicked it over to Essex, and the following day I thought 'what would have happened if that truck had had a crash – it had two thirds of the clock in it'..."

Mike's day is taken up with meetings, liaising with contractors and customers, as well as the inevitable problems which need to be sorted in double quick time.

He leads eight technical officers – one electrical, one mechanical and one furnishing for each of the Commons and Lords, a catering engineer and a deputy manager.

Mike still believes the maintenance team should be all but anonymous, keeping things ticking over and sorting problems quickly and quietly.

The clock engineers are part of the craft team, which Mike works with – they include fitters, carpenters, carpet workers and the three clock engineers.

And despite his wish to shun the limelight, the Great Clock has been a regular feature of media coverage in recent months.

"The last big thing was ringing Big Ben for the Olympics," he said.

"We had to do a quick technical assessment – would it do any damage?

"How do you answer that – it has never been done? We had about a day to decide whether it was safe to do it or not.

"It rang 30 times; we had to start at 2.12 exactly but we had to stop at 2.15 for the quarter chimes, so we only had a fixed amount of time.

"I am rather glad we stopped at 30 because it was beginning to vibrate somewhat. It was quite nerve-racking once we got started.

"Basically we had to release a brake, and let a one-ton weight drop. It is just like a giant grandfather clock, really..."



● Mike McCann plays to the camera on board an RFA ship

Happy (early) birthday, Royal!

CELEBRATIONS are already gearing up for the Royal Marines' 350th birthday.

It's going to be a big do, although the actual date isn't until 2014.

One of the first events is the Commando 999 Speed March World Record attempt, which takes place next month.

Two teams of serving and former Royal Marines will attempt to break two world speed marching records in one day as they yomp 26 miles around central London on Saturday November 10.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, and his wife Samantha will address the teams and wave them off as they set off from Downing St.

Ring in their ears will be the voices of the Military Wives' Choir, whose singers are turning up to inspire them and help them on their way.

As they pound the capital's pavements, laden down with kit and weapons weighing over 40lbs, they will pass iconic landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, and Nelson's Column.

And as if the 26-mile distance is not challenging enough, they aim to break the record by completing the circuit in under four hours and 19 minutes.

The record attempt is one of the first events of RM 350, which celebrates the 350th anniversary of the Corps. Events will take place throughout 2013 until the landmark year.

Mark Scoular, who founded Commando 999 three years ago, said: "The march provides an opportunity to raise vital funds for Commando 999 and the Royal Marines' Association celebrate the work of the past 350 years and make the public aware of the brilliant work they do."

On the evening of November 10, the speed march will be celebrated at a Royal Marines' Regimental Dinner at the Grand Connaught Rooms near Covent Garden, where the Military Wives' Choir will again serenade them with some performances of well-known choral compositions.

Commando 999 is dedicated to former Royal Marines Commandos who are now serving in the UK emergency services, including firefighters, ambulance servicemen and police officers.

They raise funds for the Royal Marines' Association and the RM Charitable Trust Fund which looks after the entire Corps' family, including dependants and relatives.

Commando 999 aims to raise more than £1million for the RM Association by 2014.

Victorious vamoose

A TEAM from HMS Victorious, with some friends, family and supporters, took part in the Great Scottish Run 2012 in Glasgow in September, raising £500 for the boat's affiliated charity, the Fountains Primary School.

The team (with their times in brackets) were Lt Mickael Zauchenberger (1hr 41), CPO Chris Taylor (1hr 42), LCH Joseph McGrath (1hr 52), AB(D) Darren Jacques (1hr 42), Johnathan Mullan (2hr 21), Jillian Gill (2hr 15) and Joe McGrath (2 hr 21).

Bears boon

THE ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines' Children's Fund was presented with a cheque for £2,500 from The Sporting Bears, raised as part of the Planes, Games and Automobiles day at Goodwood Motor Circuit.

Sultan 'dogs' for blind veterans

TWO dozen blind veterans have golfed, sailed, glided, shot and generally skylarked their way through their annual summer camp at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

The group, members of Blind Veterans UK, are the latest beneficiaries of a long-standing link between the Fleet Air Arm Command field gun crew and St Dunstan's – the former name of the charity – which dates back to the late 1940s.

Early on the sighted helpers became known as 'dogs' – a tradition that persists to this day – and with the demise of the field gun team and the closure of HMS Daedalus the responsibility for hosting the camp devolved to the Fleet Air Arm Association and HMS Sultan.

During the course of the week the veterans – around half from the Army and a third from the Naval Service – got the chance to sail at Gosport, go gliding from the old Daedalus airfield, take part in archery sessions with the Havant and Hayling Bowmen, go canoeing and fishing, take rides with the RN Motorcycle Club and Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service, visit the Gurkha Museum in Winchester and compete at pitch and putt (pictured) and ten-pin bowling.

Former soldier Brian Land lost his sight as a result of a traffic accident in Germany in 1960.

"I have been coming here about 32 years – you keep coming back to see if it gets any better... I will try again next year to see if it improves," he said.

"There is a lot of camaraderie, because we are all in the same boat."

"It's a really good week. I enjoy



every day because every day is different."

Dogs come and go – former Naval Airman Brad Jefferies did it for a couple of years in the 1950s and was talked back into the programme this year, ex-Chief Air Fitter Kevin Rixon has volunteered to be a dog every year since 1966 (except three years when he was at sea) while Arnold Thompson has been hosting and helping since 1980.

Nigel 'Doc' Whiteley has experienced both sides; while working in the Middle East with 846 Naval Air Squadron as a POMA he contracted a disease which, amongst other things, caused him to lose most of his vision in stages.

He was a dog for the FAA field gun crew in 1972, and has been attending as a member of St Dunstan's/Blind Veterans UK since 2000.

Event organiser Dave Burrows, who has been running the scheme for 20 years, said the key is a gradual evolution.

"There's a number of people who come year on year, but people

drop out and others come in.

"It would be difficult to take all new people every year because it would change the atmosphere."

"So there is a core, and through natural wastage we introduce new people, so the ethos remains the same."

Former Royal Marine Maj Gen Andrew Keeling, now chairman of the charity, paid a visit to the camp and said: "Blind Veterans UK supports people to help them do things they never thought they could do again – like make a cup of tea, or bake a cake."

"It's all about getting them to realize they can do things and lead an enjoyable, satisfying life."

"This camp is part of it. You can feel the buzz – I think it is absolutely fantastic."

"The Service sense of humour is hugely uplifting for them, and it also gets them away from home for a week which their wives are probably very grateful for..."

"We are hugely grateful to the Commodore and senior management here at HMS Sultan, because we couldn't do this without all their support."

Band in the Pink

STANDING out in shocking pink, there was no missing the female bandies of the HMS Heron Volunteer band as they marched and played their way around the green paths of Millfield School.

The 11 volunteer bandies joined a scratch band of 22 musicians from the volunteer bands of Sultan, Drake, Collingwood and Seahawk to take part in a Cancer Research UK Race for Life charity event at the school in Somerset.

The women in pink marched in formation around the three-mile circuit, joining other fundraisers who were running, jogging, marching or walking.

The distance was no problem for the volunteer bandies, as every February the Heron Band takes part in the Cologne Carnival Parade in Germany, which has a circuit around the city that can be as long as eight miles.

The bandies marched in formation around the circuit playing all the way, led by Drum Major Kerry Edwards, who recently won top honours at the Royal Navy Volunteer Band Festival in Portsmouth.

SSAFA shows its support

SSAFA has issued its 2011 headline report providing a brief resume of its efforts over the previous year.

The breakdown includes the following figures: 44,215 cases and visits were conducted by Branch volunteers, 78 children attended short breaks, 4,474 calls were made to Forcesline, the confidential support line, and 170 family members were part of the charity's Support Group for Bereaved Families.

The number of veterans

supported was 6,470 Royal Navy, 26,444 Army, 9,907 RAF and 1,394 others.

"All of this work is ongoing and we have been busier than ever this year providing practical help and assistance where it is most needed," said Major General Andrew Cumming, Controller of SSAFA Forces Help.

Major General Cumming retired at the end of September after eight years in the job, to be replaced by Air Vice-Marshal The Honourable David Murray.

CPO Tom Page, of RNAS Yeovilton, who also plays in the HMS Heron band, was on hand to assist.

He said: "The crowds love it, the first couple of years people at the venues were amazed."

"It's a long way to be marching, reading music and playing instruments. We used to take the commenting teams by complete surprise, now we're a regular fixture and get invited to attend."

The group has played at all the Race for Life events in the band members' areas. They have taken part now for four years and have a distinctive rig of black tee-shirts with pink accessories, a world away from their usual smart uniform.

Dr Zoe Goldthorpe, who played the bass drum at this year's event, said: "We did the Race for Life in Southsea in August with a band of 45 female musicians playing along the whole course."

She added: "It's a terrific honour to be raising money for such a worthy cause, and it's a very good cause, as everyone has had a connection with cancer."

Kelly runs for Gold

KELLY Duff and her 'support team' from RFA Gold Rover raised £700 for the charity Race for Life after running five kilometres in Simonstown, South Africa.

Kelly ran the race in memory of her grandfather, who died of cancer in April. The race date was July 1 – the day which would have been his 89th birthday, which Kelly took as a sign.

She said: "I didn't run the best time in the world, but it was never about the time. It was about doing something for a brilliant person who had a great impact on my life."



● Members of HMS Artful's ship's company and Barrow shipyard engineers cycled from Barrow to Southampton

Artful in action

A TEAM of cyclists from submarine-in-build HMS Artful set out from Barrow-in-Furness to Southampton to raise money for the Forces Children's Trust.

Four members from the now 30-strong crew of Artful were joined by three Barrow shipyard engineers from BAE Systems to cycle the 325 miles over the course of four days.

The cyclists hope that this will become an annual event in memory of Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux, who was killed on board Artful's sister boat HMS Astute in Southampton in 2011.

The riders included: Craig Middleton; Stan Stannard (part of the journey); Dieter Jung; Dieter

Jung Jnr; Dunanc Phillippo; John Benson; Dave Preece and Dave Mason, supported by Taff Brunning and Mike Hitchings.

The only real incident along the way was a rear-ending; but fortunately that was Dieter Jnr crashing into his dad, so apart from pride, the main damage was a severely buckled wheel and bent brake disc – swiftly resolved with the assistance of Halfords.

To date the team have raised over £3,000 for the Forces Children's Trust – a charity chosen by Lt Cdr Molyneux's family.

Please show your support through: <http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/aclasscadence1>.

Nurses just keep running

IF YOU read August's edition, you'll know that Naval Nurses Samantha Marsh and Laura Fallon had run six of their planned baker's dozen of half-marathons and that there was still one more run waiting to be booked.

Since then they have completed the Torbay/Paignton half with its hills and repeated circuit of the town, the Banbury half, which proved to be more of a challenge than expected and the Kenilworth half.

This takes the grand total to nine and with Bristol, Cardiff and Gosport booked, the apparently ever elusive 13th half marathon is still undecided upon.

Injuries have occurred for

both nurses, which has not only presented an obstacle to completing runs but the additional problems of not being able to train or prepare.

But against these odds both nurses have overcome these hindrances and done well in all their runs to date and things appear to be going from strength to strength with each new undertaking.

However your support is still needed, information on the challenge is on the Royal Navy and Royal Marine Charity (RNRMC) Facebook page and support can still be pledged at [virginmoneygiving.com/team/samandlaurabd](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/samandlaurabd)

A special day with Somerset

SAILORS from HMS Somerset helped create a special day for pupils when they visited Baytree School, in Weston-Super-Mare.

The small contingent of the ship's company who visited the school took part in classes in an Olympic-inspired sports event and a country dancing lesson.

They were given a tour of the school, where they met all 67 pupils. Cdr Paul Bristowe, Somerset's Commanding Officer, presented a cheque for £1,000 to the school funds.

The money was raised by a sponsored static equivalent row of the Suez Canal during Somerset's six-month deployment to the Middle East.

Cdr Bristowe said: "HMS Somerset's affiliates are held in extremely high regard by the ship's company."

"This visit to Baytree is a wonderful opportunity to interact

with the pupils, give them an insight into the roles of the RN, and to contribute to a very worthy cause."

Baytree School has been an affiliate of the ship for more than three years and is regularly visited by her sailors. Pupils from the school have returned the compliment by touring the ship alongside in Devonport Naval Base.

The school is a special school for 67 pupils aged three to 19 who have severe learning difficulties.

Lt Sam Harradine said: "It was great to go to the school and see what the money we raised will be used for."

"I really enjoyed meeting all the children and staff and look forward to returning."

He added: "A particular highlight was the country dancing, it's not something I had done before!"

Ben swims the Rock

IN our August edition, we brought news of Ben Donohue, who was planning to swim the equivalent of the distance around the Rock of Gibraltar to help a boy he had never met.

On September 1, Ben completed his swim, finishing 172 lengths of a 50 metre pool in just over three-and-a-half hours.

Ben's goal was to raise £5,000 for Jamie Inglis, who needs urgent funds for medical treatment.

Ben's father, CPO (D) Paddy Donohue, said: "The goal was to raise £5,000 and we are over £8,000, maybe going on for a possible £10,000."

"I'm very grateful for all the support and backing we've received, which was way above our expectations."

He added: "Ben was made an honorary member of the Bluefin Swim Club, which is a small group who have swum the Strait of Gibraltar, they came and swam with him for a bit, and also members of the Gibraltar A and B swimming teams."

"And he has been invited for tea with the Governor of Gibraltar, which is a lovely gesture."



● A police officer and Olympic official confer in Bulwark's cavernous operations room while (top) two police RIBs flank a Royal Marines ORC and (below) the magnificent sight of Bulwark in formation with 96 RIBs, ORCs, patrol craft, P2000s – the maritime shield for sailing events in Weymouth Bay



● An RAF Puma leads a diamond formation of an Army Lynx, Lynx Mk8 of 815 NAS and Bagger Sea King of 854 NAS over the Oxfordshire countryside

The carnival

WHICH may leave most of us feeling a little flat right now, but it's probably something of a relief for the 2,600 sailors and Royal Marines involved in Operation Olympics.

Billed as the biggest peacetime security operation staged in the UK, it was

- (a) demanding
- (b) repetitive
- (c) played out in the full glare of publicity and
- (d) most importantly, successful.

Rewind a couple of months or so to mid-July and there was more doom and gloom in the media surrounding the Olympics – security issues, traffic chaos, queues at Heathrow etc ad nauseam – than a month's worth of *EastEnders*...

Except it didn't turn out like that. To be sure, the call for extra military personnel did upset plans, holidays, leave, life.

But otherwise, most Britons would agree that the 'event of a lifetime' ran as smoothly as anyone might have hoped beforehand, if not more so.

The reason? Thorough planning, not a little stoicism and a sense of humour...

Central to the security shield around sailing events in Weymouth Bay was flagship HMS Bulwark, first at sea for the Olympics, then alongside in Portland for the Paralympics.

The assault ship acted as the command and control centre for Dorset Police. From her ops room, a whole team of sailors, police and coastguards watched the seas around Weymouth and controlled the police launches, divers, Royal Marines landing craft, and patrol boats.

Live images of the area were transmitted by special cameras fitted to Merlins of 814 Naval Air Squadron on patrol overhead.

The whole security operation was a delicate balance between deterring threats yet maintaining a seemingly-relaxed presence in the waters off Weymouth, where there have been no security restrictions since World War 2.

Its success was a feat of planning and of co-operation among all the agencies which took part.

Capt Alex Burton, Bulwark's Commanding Officer at the time of the Games, described the operation as "the iron fist in the silk glove."

He explained. "There was a difference between doing the games in Weymouth and London.

"If you were intent on doing ill in London, you would get searched when you went into

the Olympic village, searched again in the stadium, and a large team of men dressed in green would be ready to stop you before you got onto the track and stood next to Usain Bolt.

"Compare that to Dorset, where you could get into a boat in St Malo and come across the channel all the way to Weymouth where we had no right to search you."

He explained: "If you didn't want a discreet presence it would be very easy because you could put a ring of steel around the area – most Royal Navy officers would tell you that 50 square miles of sea is easy to secure.

"But the government quite rightly didn't want a ring of steel. We were working for the police, and we needed to be able to act against someone who potentially was 30 seconds away from the Olympic players, while keeping free access to all in certain areas."

Superintendent Charlie Eggar, Lead Maritime Commander with Dorset Police, said: "The police are used to tension between total security and total accessibility, as we do it all the time with football matches and sporting events – but not on this scale.

"As soon as we stop members of the public doing something for no good reason, we lose the moral high ground."

Education and deterrence were essential to the plan, so long before the Games, the message went out that although they were open to all there were restricted areas where passes would be required.

Rehearsals and exercises were widely publicised to make it clear to any potential troublemaker that there was going to be a discreet but robust military presence. That presence consisted of:

- official Olympics stewards or marshals as the first line of defence against any wrongdoers;
- waterborne police in the second line;
- a third and final line: the Royal Marines and Royal Navy in fast attack craft or helicopters, ordered to intervene as a last resort – which in the event was thankfully never necessary.

Standing ready for any eventuality was the team of Marines led by Sgt Maj 'Dinger' Bell. As co-ordinator and personnel manager for 4 Assault Squadron, he looked after the welfare, administration and discipline of all the Marines on board the Fleet Flagship.

The squadron was bolstered

by 12 extra marines from 10 Landing Craft Training Squadron, six personnel from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment (normally based at Marchwood) and an additional 20 offshore raiding craft (ORC) gunners from 42 Commando based in Bickleigh – in sum nearly 40 extra personnel added to the troops of 4ASRM.

"In addition to looking after the welfare and various needs of these personnel, I was nominated to be one of the escorts of all the VIP visitors that we have conducted tours for," Sgt Maj Bell explained.

"It's been busy, a good challenge but also a fascinating experience working alongside the police and so many other agencies sharing our ship with them.

"The integration seen between the ship's company and the visitors was a real success story."

This maritime security operation, probably the biggest peacetime one ever seen in the UK, took months to plan.

Working with the Royal Navy and Dorset police, the principal agencies involved were LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Planning meetings began in May 2011, in a busy period for HMS Bulwark, as she was working up for readiness as an amphibious landing ship.

Capt Burton recalled: "Every month for about two or three days, we had a conference or a training period with the key 20-30 people.

"We started fusing our cultures, fusing our language, and understanding how we were going to do the job.

"We flew people out and back. I flew back from Poland for a visit and took a small team with me, and the police travelled up to see us when we were returning from Norway on Exercise Cold Response.

"We had another conference in Scotland during Joint Warrior, so dotted throughout a pretty intense generation programme for the ship was the battle rhythm of conferences and training."

He added: "When we embark a brigade with a brigade or a maritime commander, it's as much their ship as ours, so the cultural shift of Bulwark being a staff ship was quite easy to make."

Supt Eggar said: "This has been a real case study in how to do a large and extraordinarily complicated operation from scratch using all these agencies."

He explained: "There was no template for this, no manual, no plan. Nothing like this has been done on this scale before.

"It all works on personalities and you've got to meet the team early, you've got to get around the table.

"When you're dealing with an email address it's not the same, as soon as you know the person around the table, it starts happening."

He added: "The police don't regularly identify, track and control multiple targets in a waterborne environment.

"The Royal Navy do, so it made perfect sense to use them to do that."

He added: "It could have gone less smoothly than it did had people not come to the table with open minds and a willingness to make this thing succeed.

"Egos were left outside the room and we all realised we had a common problem and together we were stronger."

During the Games themselves, there were 200 extra people working in the ship.

As their numbers swelled, the sailors in Bulwark's ops room found themselves working alongside police from three county forces as well as staff from several agencies.

Many of the staff lived in the ship for several weeks, building close working relationships with the ship's company.

"The co-operation with the ship has been superb, we could not have asked for more," said Richard Salaman, the LOCOG representative in the ship and a former coastguard.

"I had thought it would be hard for the Navy to adapt – it's their ship and suddenly this was a Dorset police operation, but it's gone beautifully.

"We could not have had a better batch of people. The atmosphere has been great. Everyone has been friendly and helpful and we've all been accepted on board, civilians or not."

Rachael Franklin, from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, was the 'bronze' coastguard commander, supervising the marine craft controllers in the ops room and on hand to co-ordinate any Search and Rescue operations.

She said: "It's been fabulous living in the ship, although I'm not used to this piping lark at seven in the morning! But working with the Royal Navy has been very good. Some of our staff are former Royal Navy people anyway, so they know the ropes."

For Supt Eggar, a former Royal Marine and Falklands





side on the way to Buckingham Palace for the victory parade fly-past

val is over

veteran, living in Bulwark was like old times.

He said: "As an ex-Marine, I know what we were doing to the ship and how we were turning it on its head.

"There've been times when I'm sure the Navy has cringed and winced at what we've done to their ship, to their processes, policies and procedures, but they've always had the good grace and fantastic manners never to make that visible."

He added: "This lot will be war-fighting again in a couple of weeks' time and we turned them into a quasi-civilian ops room. They've got to get their teeth back on track and that will be no mean feat."

All sides agree they have learned lessons from each other.

Capt Burton said: "It's been very interesting having these three extremes of planning. On the far extreme of 'plan to death' is the military.

"In the middle is the police which is 'just enough just in time' because they don't have the capacity to do otherwise, and far left is LOCOG, which was brought together for one specific purpose.

"Bringing those cultures together was really healthy. We've learnt there's no need to go through every process and every option and we need to be far more agile in adapting our processes to a situation where an 80 percent solution is good enough – that's what we gain from the police.

"And I don't know what they gained from us, I hope something!"

Supt Eggar added: "Contingency planning is something the military are extremely good at.

"The military check everything extremely thoroughly – check, check and check again. In a normal policing environment we're operational every day so can't always get to that high level of readiness, but perhaps contingency planning and looking well over the horizon is a good thing.

"The efficiency with which they run their ops room is without doubt, and a lot of these skills are transferable."

Capt Burton said: "This whole journey has proved the value of a ship like Bulwark and what she offers to the nation – versatility, value for money and the outstanding quality of our people."

"I have walked around the ship and seen every member of my ship's company doing something, whether it was the medics, or the chefs serving buffet lunches for 50, or the ops room closed up day after day.

"I know my ship's company found it extremely hard work. But they knew that on top of the most strategically important operation that defence has done for a generation, if we'd got something tactically wrong off the coast of Weymouth, the implications would have scarred London as much as Munich in 1972."

SO THAT was Britain's flagship. But what of the nation's biggest warship?

Well, whereas Bulwark enjoyed an albeit short break back in Devonport between Olympic and Paralympic events, not so HMS Ocean which was moored on the Thames at Greenwich for nearly two months (the carrot was a four-day visit to Amsterdam at the end of Op Olympics).

The Mighty O was dispatched to the capital with two missions: to serve as a helipad; and provide quarters for some of the thousands of troops assigned to the security duties in nearby Greenwich Park for equestrian events.

The carrier acted as a temporary home for Royal Navy and Army Lynx helicopters (the former from 815 NAS) supporting police with air and river security. Ocean also operated London Air Ambulance and Metropolitan Police helicopters.

Three helicopters and 60 air and ground crew decamped from their home base of RNAS Yeovilton to Ocean.

Operation Olympics threw up some unique challenges for all 60 men and women involved in the 815 effort.

London City airport was just two miles from Ocean, not to mention flights into and out of Heathrow heading over the capital at various altitudes.

That alone meant a great deal of planning: much of the daily tasking started very early in the morning and throughout the day there were constant updates with briefings, keeping everything on track should the worst possible scenario occur.

"Operating in this unusual battlespace has brought with it a series of demanding and challenging problems," said Lt Cdr Nigel Cunningham, in charge of the 815 detachment aboard Ocean.

"The ship was berthed just yards from the Olympic equestrian events which, as you can imagine meant we had to establish different routines for launching and recovering the aircraft in order to protect the horses from the helicopter noise."

His job as detachment commander meant he was aboard HMS Ocean for most of

the summer, working with the Police and Olympic organisers; thanks to all the previous preparation, the flier has been living breathing and sleeping with the games for well over a year.

Despite the constant rounds of briefings, endless stream of VIP visitors and exhausting days, the Lynx force did enjoy some golden moments.

Those flying had the best seats in the house for some events, enjoying the spectacle of the Games and the opening and closing ceremonies from very unusual angles.

"We started exercising and rehearsing for the London events so long ago now; it's been amazing to be part of it," Lt Cdr Cunningham added.

"I believe that everyone in uniform has made a lasting contribution to the success of the games in more ways than one. Not only has it been great for us to meet the public but they've had a chance to get to know us."

In all the Army and Fleet Air Arm Lynx flew 1,680 hours during Operation Olympics – that's ten whole weeks – with trained snipers embarked.

Like their counterparts in Weymouth, they were thankfully not called upon in anger.

At the peak of the effort in the capital, there were more than 1,000 people living onboard the helicopter carrier – putting her 'hotel services' to the test; the ship's galley served up 100,000 meals during London 2012.

The ship hosted VIPs including the Princess Royal and Prince Michael of Kent, Prime Minister David Cameron, four other ministers, 38 senior military officers, senior civil servants and 125 tours for groups of youth, uniformed, veteran and other organisations.

Three charity receptions were held on board and, as a morale booster, a number of Team GB athletes dropped in on Ocean to thank her men and women for their efforts.

In all, while moored in the Thames, the Mighty Os welcomed just shy of 20,000 visitors to their ship.

In return, some of the ship's sailors and Royal Marines did get the chance to attend various Olympic events, including the Paralympics closing ceremony and tours to many London sites typically off-limits to the public, notably the Houses of Parliament and 10 Downing Street.

"It's been a fantastic and thoroughly rewarding experience to have played our part in this fabulous summer of sporting endeavour," said Capt

Andrew Betton, Ocean's CO.

"Our return home to Plymouth closes a fascinating chapter in the ship's life."

Indeed it does. The rest of 2012 is devoted to preparing the carrier for a major year-long refit in her home port while HMS Illustrious takes her place. Ocean's due to resume her duties in 2014 when Lusty pays off.

THE last act of Op Olympics was undoubtedly the most enjoyable for those on duty: the Team GB victory parade through the capital.

An estimated one million people packed the streets.

They saw not just the cream of the nation's athletic talent – among them Royal Marines judoka Chris Sherrington – but also some of the 18,000-plus Service personnel who've been instrumental in making the Olympic and Paralympic Games a success.

And they heard stirring – and suitably British – marches from the military's premiere musicians: the Band of HM Royal Marines, who marched behind the 21 floats carrying the athletes.

Celebrations drew to a close on The Mall and around the Victoria Memorial, where 600 members of the Armed Forces joined spectators.

They were treated to a spectacular fly-past by the British Airways Airbus which delivered the Flame to RNAS Culdrose back in May, plus the Red Arrows, a Bagger Sea King of 854 NAS and Lynx from 815 NAS, an RAF Puma and Army Lynx, and RAF Typhoons.

All in all, says Britain's ranking sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, the Naval Service made "a telling contribution" to the success of the sporting spectacle and everyone involved had "represented the Royal Navy outstandingly well".

His superior, Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards, said there had been "nothing but praise" for what the Navy, Army and Air Force did over the summer.

And from General Nick Parker – the Army's Commander Land Forces – a surprising admission.

"I was always confident that we were well-placed to help deliver the 'greatest Games ever'," he said.

"What I was not prepared for was the public's reaction. The messages of thanks and appreciation have been overwhelming and communities across the country have embraced us."

Not quite as good as a gold medal, but we'll take it.



● A reservist from Northwood RNR unit HMS Wildfire on security duties at Greenwich and (below) the Band of HM Royal Marines provide pomp, ceremony and stirring tunes at the victory parade



● Ocean's sailors meet one of Team GB's mascots and (below) applaud the achievements of the our athletes



Harsh treatment of a Navy widow

THE Forces Pension Society views with dismay the jailing for nine months of mother-of-two Mrs Carol Garside, as a result of undeclared cohabitation and remarriage whilst in receipt of a Navy widow's pension.

The Society is committed to upholding the law and the course of justice and it has every sympathy for judges who must enforce these archaic rules.

But we repeat our offer to work closely with the Government to remove the regulations which divide widow from widow on differing pension schemes and which create different classes of Service widow, tragically depending on how their husband has died.

These rules keep people apart, single and lonely, and invite, as in this case, anonymous tip-offs.

What state can be proud of relying on an anonymous tip-off to start proceedings against a Service widow, resulting in imprisonment?

If the rules are not modernised and harmonised with those of other Ministry of Defence schemes, they will remain to blight lives for the next 30 years or more.

Mrs Garside is not the first, and she won't be the last, but each case will shame the country and call into question what the Covenant is worth to those who it should support.

Maj Gen John Moore-Bick,
General Secretary,
Forces Pension Society,
Lambeth, London

Army feels the heat

WHILST not detracting from the great job the Armed Services have done at the Olympic Games, one article in the national press made me smile.

Reporting on members of the Royal Corps of Signals being billeted aboard HMS Ocean on the Thames, one soldier complained to the reporter: It's like a can of sardines."

He went on to further drip: "There's 30 men in my room.

"It's a tiny space about the size of a caravan – there are three bunk beds on top of each other, there are no windows and it gets sweaty."

Bless! Good job he only has to endure such 'awful conditions' for a couple of weeks and not months on end on deployment.

And as far as getting sweaty – well, the Army aren't called Pongos for nothing.

– **C Gooch, ex LRO,**
Tamworth, Staffs

Olympic fleet

I CAN add the following to the list of ships' names with Olympic connections: HMSs Striker and Defender (football), Sabre (fencing), Arrow (archery), Rifleman (shooting), Umpire (hockey and tennis) Contest, Triumph and Victory.

– **Bob Bucknall, Hatfield**
Heath, Middlesex

Opinion

NAMING a new class of warships is great fun (as Chris Cope's letter, above, suggests) but it's also a potential minefield.

For everyone who approves your choice, there will be those who feel slighted, or who don't understand the historical connotations (see page 14 for a potted history of the great Admiral Duncan).

Placenames can be particularly tricky. The city of Sheffield, whose affiliations with three HMS Sheffields were very close, turned down HMS Diamond – because she wasn't named Sheffield.

As Stephen Prince, Head of the Naval Historical Branch and chairman of the Ships' Names and Badges Committee, points out, there are far more deserving names than there are ships to give them to – and far more deserving places, too.

Where was the Navy in Dieppe?

IT IS not usual for me to criticise in any way the Service that I served in for many years, but I feel that I must voice my feelings regarding the absence of any Royal Navy personnel at the 70th anniversary commemorations of the ill-fated raid on Dieppe, codenamed Operation Jubilee.

There were eight ceremonies over three days in different landing sites in Dieppe and surrounding beaches.

Sea Cadets from Newhaven, Seaford and Hove were in attendance with their officers and were very smartly turned out.

There was also myself and two other 'old gits in blazers' proudly displaying our RNA badges.

Also absent were any members of the Royal Marines, although there were four marine commandos at the ceremonies who survived the raid, and they also commented on the lack of RN and RM at the commemorations.

Prince Michael of Kent was in attendance in the uniform of Colonel-in-Chief of the Canadian Essex Scottish Regiment.

The Governor General of Canada and various French ministers and Service dignitaries were also in attendance.

The coxswain of the Dieppe Lifeboat, who is a personal friend, put to sea to lay wreaths upon the water in honour of all those who died at sea, one significant loss being that of HMS Berkeley, a



● *The aftermath: wrecked allied armour and landing craft litters the shore at Dieppe after the abortive raid in World War 2*

Hunt-class destroyer.

The French Navy patrol boat Pluvier was also sailing up and down the Dieppe shoreline, flying the *white ensign*!

But where was the Royal Navy? Maybe someone in authority could enlighten me as to the reason for their absence?

As a resident of Puy, I felt somewhat embarrassed and upset about the whole situation.

The memorials that overlook the beaches here are scrupulously maintained and the one at Puy

(Blue Beach) is dedicated to the Royal Regiment of Canada.

From a contingent of 546 men, only 63 returned to Newhaven; 209 being killed on the beach, 262 having been taken prisoner, 103 of whom were wounded, and 16 later died of their wounds.

This disastrous operation should never be forgotten, especially by the Royal Navy as many Naval personnel were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

– **Mike Andrews,**
Puy, Neuville-les-Dieppe, France

Top of the tree with my rabbit jelly mould

THIS is a look at the Royal Navy's attitude to status and entitlement.

I joined the RN in 1960 and went to HMS Raleigh for my basic training and then on to HMS Collingwood for my electrical training.

It soon became obvious to me that in both of these establishments there were two major status symbols.

The first was a 'Pusser's Red'. This was, of course, a bike which was always painted red. Underneath the crossbar was a red metal plate on which was painted the lucky owner's details, eg, *Buffer's Party*, or *Chippy's Party*.

The second was a pusser's handcart, always painted battleship grey.

Again the lucky owner's details were painted on the sides.

If you were the proud owner, or indeed had the use of, these amazing vehicles, you were someone to be reckoned with and respected.

Many years later, I came across another version of the same



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter.

This month's winner is: **Paul Fitzgerald**

phenomenon of status and entitlement.

I was at that time serving on board HMS Hermes and had been promoted to Warrant Officer a couple of years before.

The ship went in for a short refit in 1981, mainly to put the 'ski jump' on the flight deck.

I thought it would be a good idea to move my

wife up from Dartmouth for the duration of the refit. So I obtained a married quarter over in Gosport and went over to do the moving inventory.

In those days you got everything, crockery, cutlery (including a tin opener which can only be described as an offensive weapon) and bedding (not sheets).

The inventory went well and that evening I was going through the large booklet and rechecking it.

I suddenly saw an asterisk at the bottom of the page and printed next to it was 'Warrant

Officers only'.

Looking up the page to see what the item was, I saw 'Bookcase'. There must be more, I thought.

Looking right through the book I only found one more asterisk. It was listed in the best rate-book language as 'Jelly mould, pewter, rabbit.' Well, my cup runneth over!

The next day I got in touch with the married quarters people and asked for my full entitlement.

They thought I was joking, but they soon realised that I wasn't.

Two days later a lorry arrived with the goods. The bookcase was a half-size one but was really good and made of proper tree wood – not chipwood.

And there of course was the real prize. A jelly mould in the shape of a rabbit made of pewter. So pride of place against one wall was the bookcase (no books!) with the jelly mould on top.

Of course, any visitors were bound to ask about it and I was able to tell them the story of 'Warrant Officers only'.

This was while sitting there looking smug and thinking RHIP (rank has its privilege).

I never looked back.

– **Paul Fitzgerald, ex**
WOMEM(L), Dartmouth, Devon

Let's hear it for Hermes

FOLLOWING the letter from Lt Cdr Lester May (September) about naming the new Type 26 frigates, may I suggest that this should be the H-class with the first ship to bear the name HMS Hermes.

The remainder could carry the following names: Hawk, Hotspur, Havock, Hasty, Hardy, Harrier, Herald, Hercules, Hero, Hunter, Hurricane.

Most of these are names carried by former RN ships and I believe they would appeal to naval personnel and the public alike.

Turning to the Astute-class submarines, it is astonishing that the proposed names for the fifth, sixth and seventh boats are to be Agamemnon, Anson and Ajax.

I would venture to suggest that these names would mean absolutely nothing at all to the general public whose knowledge of Greek mythology (boats five and seven) is likely

to be limited and no doubt the name Agamemnon will be consistently misspelt.

Furthermore, the name Ajax is more likely to conjure up thoughts of a kitchen cleaner than a major frontline warship.

And as far as George Anson, an 18th-century Admiral of the Fleet, is concerned, his name will only be recalled by naval historians.

It is difficult to imagine a worse selection of names.

Perhaps three of the following might be considered to be more appropriate: Andromeda, Achilles, Argonaut, Apollo and Aurora (former Leanders), Amethyst (Yangtze incident), Avenger and Alacrity (former Type 21s), Aquarius, Agincourt (to annoy the French) and Ark Royal (now for scrap).

– **C J A Cope,**
Political Editor,
Warship World magazine,
Liskeard, Cornwall

Cracking the numbers code

I WOULD like to add a little to Lester May's letter (June) about service numbers.

When I entered the Royal Navy in 1948, the Official Number, as it was then called, consisted of three or four letters and six digits.

The digits followed consecutively and were allocated to each entrant on entry.

The first of the letters indicated the Port Division allocated to the entrant, P for Portsmouth, D for Devonport, C for Chatham and L for Lee-on-the-Solent (FAA ratings).

If the new entrant had entered on a Special Service Engagement, ie seven years in the Royal Navy followed by five years in the Royal Fleet Reserve, the second letter would be S and this would be omitted if the new entrant had entered on a 12 years' continuous Service Engagement.

The next letter (second or third, depending on the entrant's initial engagement) indicated the branch

in which the rating was to serve, eg J for Seaman, K for Engine Room, M for Miscellaneous (which included the Writer Branch), L for Steward and F for Fleet Air Arm ratings.

The last letter was X and indicated that entry was after 1925.

When I was serving in the cruiser HMS Liverpool, Master at Arms Atkins, who joined the ship in 1950, had an Official Number without the X, indicating that he had entered the Royal Navy prior to 1925.

He was the only one on board and the only one I ever came across with such an Official Number.

I entered the RN in September 1948 as a Probationary Writer on a Special Service Engagement, P/SMX 859668, later P/MX 859668 on transferring to a Continuous Service Engagement.

– **Joe Dolman, Eagle,**
Lincolnshire

Loyal service – in all but name

SADLY, I think *Navy News* has committed another faux pas regarding the P2000 patrol craft, as depicted in the September edition.

I was a member of the RNXS from 1970 until the service was disbanded in 1994 and recall that the word 'Loyal' was used as a prefix *only* on the Fleet Tenders (XSV Loyal Mediator, XSV Loyal Chancellor, etc).

It was never applied to the P2000s, they were named as XSV

Example, XSV Explorer, etc.

The word 'Loyal' wasn't prefixed to the earlier RNXS vessels either, which were mainly Inshore Minesweepers and a couple of MFV's (XSV Shipham, XSV Thakeham, MFV 1256 etc), service in several of which I have fond memories, including XSV Example and XSV Explorer.

Unless someone else has other ideas...

– **Allen Fisher, ex Charge**
Engineer, London Unit, RNXS

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JACK

BY TUGS

ALL THAT BITCHIN'
ABOUT ONE MISERABLE
BROKEN ARM!!

IN NELSON'S TIME THEY'D
LOSE A LEG AN' STILL
FALL IN FOR
BOTH WATCHES!

REPORT
TO THE
DENTAL
SURGERY!

OFF YOU
GO!
LONG JOHN!

That was no lady, that was my wife!

I READ with extreme interest the letters (August) about ex-matelots and the Commercial Road 'Lady of the Night' Big Sylvia and her enraptured tyrannical crew, not forgetting my passion, Slack Alice.

I had joined the RN in 1960 after working five years down the Nottinghamshire coalmines and, like any young sailor, my mind was to be opened to many new experiences.

It was in 1964 that I achieved my A/LME rate and invited my wife down to Pompey for the weekend.

My mates had arranged to meet me and my wife in the Lennox, which I did not remember having used before.

It was quite busy with a varied selection of ships' companies drinking rough cider, most of them laughing and joking with certain established women.

I went to the Gents, and on my return saw that my wife was pinned against the wall by two of these women.

I immediately went to her aid and brushed them aside. My wife was distraught – accused of being on the Big Sylvia patch, and told to take her wares out of the Lennox and Pompey.

The situation calmed down when it was realised that an injustice had been done – and Big Sylvia came over to put matters right.

My wife could not believe what had just happened and that I should drink in such places. It jeopardised our weekend.

The lads laughed it off and said we should go to the Fleece, but we returned to the Home Club, which was the highlight of the whole weekend – and my wife never visited Pompey again during my RN service.

– R T Ayre

...OF the four pubs listed there was also The Albany. Did Georgie Joyce step outside her comfort zone of the Lennox?

I am sure I saw her in the Far East during 1960-61 whilst I was on Bulwark.

I did a nostalgic trip to Pompey about 1978 and checked the old haunts.

They were more drinking dens than pubs, a couple of rooms knocked together with a bar, table and two chairs, juke box, dart board – no carpets and the toilets defied description.

I wonder of the hundreds of pubs in Pompey in the 1950s how many survive to this day?

– Colin Taylor, Ilford, Essex

...MY memories of Pompey Lil were getting off the train at the central Portsmouth station in 1956-57 and walking through the park to the whelks and cockles stall at the junction of Queen Street, where there was a single railway track which had been used during the last war.

Lil was always there, often asking for a cigarette, "nothing more."

I would then hurry on to the barracks where I was an officers' steward, eating those delicious eats and making sure I was in before 23:59hrs.

Happy days – sometimes!

– Gordon Rice, Crawley

...YOU missed one person out of your reports on the 'ladies of the night'.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s in the Lennox pub opposite the Guildhall there was a lady in her 70s called Flo.

She had a Marianne Faithfull haircut, she was grey-haired and had no front teeth and for a pint of scrumpy that cost 10d she would dance on the table to Chuck Berry's *Johnny be Good*.

A matelot must have given her a pair of flip-flops, because that was the first time I had seen flip-flops until I visited the Far East.

– Derek Lewis, Conwy, North Wales

Is the MOD mean with campaign medals?

I WAS interested in August's editorial comment regarding campaign awards and your mention of Yangtze 1949.

Why were no battle honours awarded to HM ships Amethyst and London for their heroic action?

I would also award battle honours to units and campaign medals to participants for Suez 1956 – it was not a military defeat but a political defeat.

The Armed Forces carried out their orders and their mission with their usual bravery and professionalism and this should be recognised.

The Australians have issued battle honours for post-war campaigns such as Malaya 1956,

Vietnam 1967-71 – hardly a glorious victory, East Timor 1999 and Persian Gulf 2001-02, so why not the Royal Navy and the MOD for equivalent unit actions?

I sincerely hope that once Afghanistan is restored to so-called democracy, unit awards will be made and also for Libya.

Our forces' heroics must be recognised.

– Graham Dines, Felixstowe, Suffolk

...I RECENTLY received the Medal of Ushakov from the Russian Federation for, as the accompanying letter states, "your wartime merits and specifically the participation in Northern Convoys which delivered valuable resources and weaponry to the Soviet Union

during WW2."

In light of the ongoing controversy as to whether the British Government should strike a medal for those who served in the Royal Navy or the Merchant Marine during those dark days of the Arctic convoys, I thought it ironic that it is our wartime ally who shows its appreciation in such a tangible way, especially since this is the second medal I have received from the Russians.

To all those ageing ex-sailors who went to Russia, and who are still with us, I send my greetings.

I trust that they too have received their medals from the Russian Federation.

– Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida

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E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

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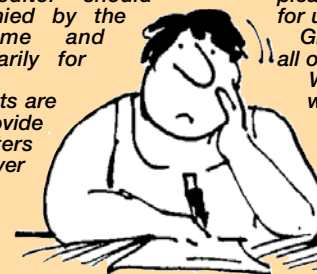
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No prejudice about heroes of Shackleton

ON the slim chance that you would permit the Shackleton saga to continue, I found encouragement in Mr Ingham's letter (September) regarding Admiral Perowne's comment on my "prejudice against the Merchant Navy".

What I actually said was that "the real heroes were Lt Frank Worsley and Petty Officer Tom Crean".

Clearly Admiral Perowne did not realise that Worsley was a Merchant Navy officer holding the rank of Lieutenant RNR.

It was Worsley who accused Shackleton of causing "unnecessary misery" on the James Caird's voyage to South Georgia – not me.

As for Professor Dowdeswell's claim that it would be "very difficult to justify" my comment that "Shackleton routinely abandoned his men", it would, in fact, be very easy.

On February 27 1909, Shackleton's party consisted of two fit men, Adams and Wild, and two unfit, Marshall, who had dysentery, and Shackleton himself who was suffering from split heels and severe headaches.

The obvious answer to the problem was to send the two fit men on the base to get help. This would have left Shackleton to look after Marshall.

Instead, he left with Wild, slowing the petty officer down in the rescue bid, but ensuring that he and his diaries reached safety.

On April 24 1915, Shackleton once again removed himself

from the scene of greatest danger when he abandoned his men on Elephant Island by leaving in the James Caird.

Admitting to Worsley that he had no knowledge of small boat work, he imperiled the enterprise by insisting that the boat was under-ballasted and demanded that more ballast be added (hence Worsley's comments about "unnecessary misery").

In addition to Worsley, Shackleton took Petty Officer Crean, the ship's carpenter, and two able seamen.

Thanks to Worsley's expert navigation, the boat arrived on South Georgia two weeks later.

Afterwards, Worsley noted with heavy sarcasm that "it was certain that a man of such heroic mind and self-sacrificing nature as Shackleton would undertake this most difficult task himself."

Naturally, having reached land, Shackleton had no further use for the carpenter and the two seamen (one of whom was suffering from exposure) so they were left behind as he, taking Worsley and Crean with him, made the 36-hour journey to the Stromness whaling base.

Where did this information come from?

It came from Professor Dowdeswell's own archives and library at the Scott Polar Research Institute, thanks to the help and guidance of the Institute's superb staff.

– E C Coleman, Bishop Norton, Lincolnshire

Snow fun cooking in Norway

I READ the article about Bardufoss (May) with interest as at the time of my connection with Bardufoss I was attached to 820 squadron as a cook at Culdrose.

At the time I was at a bit of a loose end since we had left HMS Eagle and were waiting for HMS Blake to be converted.

I was approached by the chief cook asking if I was prepared to go 'on loan' to 846 squadron on a pretty hush-hush mission to Norway in about 1968-69.

My briefing was that we would be leaving Portland on RFA Engadine proceeding to Norway, where we would disembark at 846 squadron land at Bardufoss. My role was to cook in 30 below temperatures and to assist with exercises.

Your article makes out that the accommodation was pretty impressive, however ours was really primitive, we slept two to a small 'garden shed' and the general common mess room was a large portacabin in which I had to cook breakfast.

The rest of the meals were taken with the Norwegian Air Force.

The first trial was to change a helicopter engine in severe temperatures, we set off after trying to adjust to the weather conditions and were taken by truck approximately 30 miles from base where we set up camp, tents, etc.

This first trial went well and the engine was changed pretty fast.

The cooking was done on a small naphtha stove.

I had to be up at five every morning and I walked miles to gather buckets of clean snow which was melted for breakfast, wearing a great deal of cold weather clothing, this was hard work. I was 17 at the time.

A US Marine eventually showed me a way of filling flasks at night in order to get a head start for the morning tea/coffee.

– Stewart Ramsay, Carnoustie, Dundee

Captain Bob was a gentleman

IT WAS with great interest that I read your article on the late Capt Bob McQueen (August, page 35).

I served with Capt Bob as a Boy Seaman on the destroyer HMS Aisne in the mid-1950s.

He was a midshipman learning about watchkeeping duties. I, of course, never spoke to him on board, but in the early 1990s I went to the RNA HQ in Chelsea to join and met him again as he

was the General Secretary.

We had a nice chat and I invited him to the dedication service of our HMS Ganges standard at the RNA clubhouse Fulham and Chelsea.

He was a gentleman and his good lady was very pleasant too.

Of course, when he retired they moved away and I never saw or met him again.

– Dave Carr, Putney, London

A British way of life

THE NATION rightly saluted 'The Few' last weekend, commemorating the Battle of Britain's 72nd anniversary.

During those summer months of that dark year in our islands' fight for survival, airmen made a crucial contribution to thwarting Hitler's ambitions.

The Roll of Honour names over 2,900 aviators and not just British airmen; nearly 600 were from 13 other nations, most in the uniform of the RAF, but not all.

Rarely mentioned, but not forgotten by sailors, are the 56 naval aviators who flew with The Few, pilots of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in the Fleet Air Arm's 804 Naval Air Squadron and 808 NAS.

The Battle of Britain was one contest of many in World War 2.

Hitler postponed Operation Sealion in September 1940, but his plans to invade our islands were never sound, thanks to the Royal Navy's guardianship of our coastal waters, especially the English Channel, that stretch of water being the principal deterrent to invasion then, as it has been for centuries.

In 1940 there were many hundreds of ships, submarines and aircraft patrolling home waters, deterring the enemy and escorting ships of the Merchant Navy, the nation's lifeline.

Over 4,700 merchant ships were lost, the liner Athena on the first day of the war.

Indeed, some 32,000 seamen lost in those ships were among the merchant seafarers saluted at the Merchant Navy Day commemorative service at Tower Hill Memorial last Sunday.

The Battle of the Atlantic will be marked next May for, in the spring of 1943, the tide turned in favour of the Allies and victory was in sight.

Merchant seafarers carry on today as they did then, bringing over 90 per cent of our nation's imports of food, goods and fuel to British ports every few minutes, every day.

Sad fate of Charybdis

JUST a line to say a big thank you for the write-up on HMS Charybdis (August).

My father, Royal Marine Joseph Chivers, sailed with her from the start and finally crossed the bar with her, where my family think he still is.

RIP all of them.

Even now, when knocking on the door of 72 years, we all still remember Dad, with his medals and photos.

At the age of 17, I followed father into the Royal Marines, and did the best part of ten years, and am still part of the Royals' family.

We do keep the Royal Navy in our family as my wife's father and uncle served at Jutland on HMS Superb.

One sad thing is that mother crossed the bar not knowing about the services that are still held for the crew in Guernsey each year, but I think she always had her memories with her.

They were on the way back from the Med hoping to see Yours Truly for the first time, but it was not to be, nor for many others probably in the same situation.

– Mike Chivers, ex-RM

...SADLY two errors, the wrong picture of HMS Charybdis and an inaccurate story of this tragic event.



● The Merchant Navy Day commemorative service at Tower Hill Memorial

Picture: Les Scrivner

We salute those seafarers and The Few, and all those who serve so that we might live a British way of life.

– Admiral Lord West of Spithead, Patron, Merchant Navy Association, House of Lords
Admiral Sir John Woodward
Rear-Admiral Jeremy Larken
Cdre Barry Bryant RN,
Director-General, Seafarers UK
Professor Eric Grove
University of Salford

Mark Dickinson,
General Secretary,
Nautilus International
Capt Mike Clapp RN
Capt Alan Hensher RN
Capt John Sail,
National Chairman,
Merchant Navy Association
Cdr Giles Binney RN
Cdr Graham Edmonds RN
Cdr Sharkey Ward RN
Lt Cdr Mike Critchley RN
Publisher, *Warship World* magazine
Lt Cdr Lester May RN

Oggie Oggie Oggie!

AS OFTEN happens in 'senior years', my mind wandered off to the days in Guzz as a very young 'Jack me tickler tin' from about 1957, serving first in Camperdown and then in Undine.

The memories which came to mind were of 'Frank's Oggie Stall' which was a caravan on waste ground near Albert Gate.

The van was illuminated and the food kept hot by paraffin in the form of Tilley lamps and a primus stove.

What a welcome sight Frank's was on a cold night after a run ashore, with the smell of hot oggies and onion gravy.

Many was the night that I trudged through the dockyard clutching a hot oggie to my chest (inside the Burberry) or eating it on the way back to the ship.

After a while, Frank's relocated to a permanent site near St Levan's Gate and although the premises were different, the same delicious and welcome fare was on offer.

The main items were 'Large Oggie' – one shilling and sixpence and 'Oggie special', a large oggie split along the top into which a long sausage was inserted and then topped off with onion gravy – two shillings.

For Chiefs and POs, a foil tray containing an eight by six inch pie filled with meat, potatoes, mushrooms and onion, price two shillings and sixpence.

Quite often, if there was a duty watch on board ship and the officer of the day was a reasonable guy, a couple of ratings would organise a shopping list and take a holdall over to Frank's for 'Big Eats' for supper.

Frank's was still going strong in the early sixties, but what happened to it after that?

Maybe the simple but delicious oggie fell foul of style and the different tastes of the modern sailor, somehow I can't imagine a young female sailor chomping through an Oggie Special.

Any ideas what happened to Franks, gentlemen?

John 'George' Sexton,
Walton-le-Dale,
Lancashire

Grand old sailors

WITH reference to the letter 'Anyone got a telegram yet?' (August) I would like to inform you that Cdr H V King, of Oranmore Castle, Galway, Ireland, is still alive and well at the ripe old age of 102.

Cdr King was CO of HMS Telemachus in July 1944 when he sunk the Japanese I – 166.

He is an honorary member of the Northern Ireland Submariners' Branch and we have members from the south as well.

– Norman Leslie,
Bangor, Co Down

...MY father, Albert (Ted) Gorman, celebrated his 100th birthday on September 19, with a grand party a few days before.

Dad joined the Navy at 16 and trained at HMS St Vincent and on HMS Empress of India and Repulse.

He served in HMS Wessex, Shoreham and Southampton.

His wartime service was in HMS Kelly under Lord Louis Mountbatten, and in HMSs Hurricane and Melbreak.

He was also a member of the 1933 Field Guns crew at Olympia.

– Alan Gorman,
Keston, Kent



2,000 and 4,000 up for Rich

A ROYAL Navy Observer reached two significant aviation milestones simultaneously, having flown 2,000 hours in Merlin helicopters and a grand total of 4,000 flying hours.

Lt Cdr Rich Carne (above), of 824 Naval Air Squadron, joined the Navy in 1985, originally flying Sea Kings with 826 and 820 NAS before a tour with 750 NAS in the Jetstream T2 aircraft.

After instructing in the Sea King simulator he became one of the Navy's first crews to fly the Merlin Mk1.

Lt Cdr Carne is currently an Observer Instructor, helping aircrew move on to the Merlin MK2.

A member of a long-established Cornish naval family, Rich's father was a Sea Vixen pilot, and several uncles were Naval officers.



Pioneering Frenchman bids adieu

ANGLO-French collaboration was alive and well in Helston as Cdr Fabrice Dehandschoewercker completed a highly-successful tour as the first French Merlin Flight Commander.

French Naval Attaché Capt Yves Le Corre visited RNAS Culdrose to say farewell to Cdr Dehandschoewercker, who had completed more than four years operating with the Fleet Air Arm.

Cdr Dehandschoewercker (above) arrived in Culdrose in April 2008 to convert to the Merlin aircraft, having previously flown the Agusta NH90.

On completion of training he joined 829 Squadron in July 2009. Highlights of his tour included being Flight Commander of the flight embarked on HMS Somerset, in which he was involved in anti piracy operations.

He led and co-ordinated a NATO anti-submarine warfare exercise at Hyères in France in June 2010, has successfully fired eight Stingray torpedoes, and acted as French liaison officer for 814 NAS while exercising in the Med near French airspace.

Fabrice, whose children attended local schools and colleges, said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with the Royal Navy in a wide range of demanding operational and training flights."

"I am particularly honoured to have been the first Frenchman to fly a front-line Merlin from a Royal Navy ship on operational deployment."

I look forward to taking that experience back to France so that our Navies can work together even more closely."

Napoleonic Russian sailors remembered



RUSSIAN Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko, personnel from the warship RFS Rear Admiral Kulakov and local council representatives paid tribute to former Russian sailors who were buried at Haslar Hospital in Gosport in 1808-09 and who have no headstone or cross (pictured left).

The ceremony was arranged during the visit by the Udaloy-class destroyer to Portsmouth.

The common grave contains the bodies of Russian sailors from the squadron of Admiral Dmitry Sinyavin, who died during their enforced stay in Portsmouth during the Napoleonic Wars.

The situation in Europe and beyond in the years following the Battle of Trafalgar saw

unusual alliances formed as a complex web of treaties – and naked aggression – pitted nation against nation.

The Russians found themselves reluctantly on the side of the French, and therefore against Britain, and when Sinyavin's squadron was bottled up in Lisbon for months in 1807-08 the great Russian admiral decided surrender on relatively friendly terms was the only option.

The squadron sailed to Portsmouth to be held as a form of security until hostilities were over, and while there the sailors who suffered from typhoid, dysentery and other diseases were treated by medical staff at Haslar – and those who succumbed were buried in the grounds.



● WO2 Reg Sheen
Picture: LA(Phot) Maxine Davies

Long player

A ROYAL Marines musician who joined the Service as a 16-year-old trombone player has been awarded his Long Service and Good Conduct clasp after completing more than 30 years.

WO2 Reg Sheen was taught the flute and saxophone by the Royal Marines, and has played to audiences all over the world.

For the past ten years he has been based at Whale Island in Portsmouth, where he is part of the Royal Marines event planning team, organising such occasions as concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and Beat Retreat ceremonies.

WO Sheen was presented with his clasp, which is added to the 15-year service medal to denote twice the period – by Brig Mark Dunham RM at a ceremony at HMS Excellent on Whale Island.

Thirty years on

A NAVAL chef and a senior officer on Olympic duty in Dorset were reunited more than 30 years after meeting during the Falklands Conflict.

Cdre Jamie Miller, now Naval Regional Commander for Wales and Western England, was serving as a Spanish interpreter on board Type 42 destroyer HMS Coventry when the ship was sunk on May 25 1982.

Cdre Miller was rescued and evacuated by landing craft of 4 Assault Squadron to RFA Fort Austin, the ship in which CPOCK Martin Etwell was then a junior cook and baker.

The pair met up on RFA Mounts Bay, Martin's current ship, when Cdre Miller was escorting a party of military visitors who were witnessing the Olympic security operation.

CPO Etwell, who has served 41 years in the RFA, said he remembered when the Coventry men were brought aboard Fort Austin, as everyone shared a cabin with a survivor, and the team of 11 chefs cooked a daily casserole to help eke out the rations.

Cdre Miller said: "It is good to see Chief Cook Etwell still doing his cooking job, feeding 463 people every day while staying cheerful, humorous and a good leader."

"He represents everything we had in the Falklands."

Support is lauded

A SUPPORT network for military families in the South West has been given royal recognition.

The RBL-funded RN Area Community Organisation Volunteer Project received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

NACO helps families during periods of separation through duty and deployments.

And a similar group in the East of England have received a top Royal Marines accolade.

The Naval Personal and Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare in the region were awarded the Commandant General RM Commendation in recognition of their community support work with families of Service personnel during the Afghanistan conflict last year when 3 Cdo Brigade headed the UK effort in Helmand.

■ For more People news turn to page 34.

Memorial honours fireman's heroism

THE family of a heroic fireman who died tackling a major blaze in London in 1951 have made an emotional visit to the place where he fell.

Naval Airmen firefighters from HMS Ocean swapped Olympic duties for remembrance as they stood with Lt Harry Harwood and his family at a ceremony to unveil a plaque in honour of Harry's grandfather Edward and two other victims.

Edward Harwood was 32 and had served in the Royal Navy from 1939-45 as a stoker, seeing service in the World War 1 C-type cruiser HMS Caledon and serving ashore in HMS Pembroke in Chatham and HMS Braganza in India.

Having joined the fire brigade after the war he was called into action on the evening of December 21 1951 when fire took hold of the Broad Street Goods Depot, now part of 1 Broadgate on the corner of Finsbury Avenue and Eldon Street, near Liverpool Street station.

Edward's fire crew worked with five others from local stations but couldn't control the fire – at the height of the blaze some 40 pumping appliances and four turntable ladders were employed, with the operation being led by the Chief Fire Officer.

While moving from the scene to a safe area one side of the building collapsed, killing Edward and two colleagues, Thomas Joy and Leslie Skitt.

Another 20 firemen were seriously injured in the operation, including the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Charles McDuell, and the plaque honours all those killed and injured.



● Family members of the victims of the 1951 Eldon Street fire are joined by London firefighters and aircraft handlers from HMS Ocean at a ceremony to unveil a memorial plaque near Liverpool Street station in London
Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool

A small ceremony was carried out, attended by senior fire officers and crews from local stations.

The service was conducted by the Chaplain for the London Fire Brigade, the Revd Mia Hilborn, and the Fireman's Prayer was read by CPO(AH) Chris Lemon.

Harry said: "Being on the exact site of the disaster and hearing the detailed account of the events almost brought it to life for me."

"Each and every one of those firemen was so courageous that night."

"My thoughts are not only for my grandfather but are also with those families who also lost loved ones."

"It really was a tremendous honour to be at the side of my mother and father on this very special and emotional occasion for our family."

Harry's father, David Harwood, aged 62, was an LEM from 1965-73, serving in HMS Rhyl and HMS Llandaff.

He joined a family member of one of the other victims to unveil

the red commemorative plaque.

He said: "I am so very proud to have been here to carry out the unveiling ceremony of this memorial plaque that honours these brave men."

"It is particularly satisfying for me and my wife to have our son Harry here to share this moment."

HMS Ocean was anchored in the Thames as a floating airfield and accommodation centre as part of the security operations for the London Olympics and Paralympics.

New team can handle the heat

FORTY weeks of blood, sweat, tears and fire has forged a group of new fully-qualified Royal Navy aircraft handlers.

The 15 recruits passed out of training and into the Fleet Air Arm at a ceremony held at the Royal Naval School of Flight Deck Operations (RNSFDO) at RNAS Culdrose in Helston.

During their time at the Cornish training centre the group learned how to safely move aircraft on a ship's flight deck and how to fight fires both ashore in domestic and aircraft emergencies and on board Royal Navy ships.

While some theory work is carried out in classrooms, the course can be fairly intense at times with some of the practical training being very hard physical work, especially the aircraft fire fighting aspect of the course (see right), much of which is carried out at Predannack Airfield on The Lizard.

Now the 15 men have formally qualified, watched by families and friends and instructors and staff from RNSFDO.

In an aircraft hangar at the Dummy Deck, a training area laid out as an aircraft carrier flight deck, against a background of a Harrier jump jet and a Naval firefighting vehicle, guest of honour Capt Willie Entwisle, the Commanding Officer of RNAS Culdrose, awarded certificates, badges and trophies to the Naval Airmen.

The Brian Marsden Memorial Trophy was presented to NA Jake Adams for being the best student on the aircraft handling phase of the course.

And the Special Endeavour Award went to the student whose personal achievement has been the greatest – on this occasion the Captain presented it to NA Dean Grindley.

The Peter Veevers Memorial Trophy was presented to NA David Hood as the best student on the firefighting phase of the course.

This award was presented by Jackie Meyers, the sister of Peter Veevers, an Aircraft Handler who died in 1976.

Following the passing-in ceremony the Naval Airmen changed from No1 uniforms into their working rig to give a demonstration of how aircraft are moved around a ship's flight deck as they are prepared for take off.

This was followed by another change of clothes, into their protective firefighting equipment and the Naval Airmen then demonstrated how to fight a domestic fire.

Following this special day in their new careers, the group will now go to airfield fire stations at RNAS Culdrose and RNAS Yeovilton for a month of on-the-job training before being drafted into the Fleet to put their training into practice.



Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Signal for Op Gzira

IN 1963 a farewell ceremony was held in the Granada Bar, Gzira, Malta, attended by many signalmen from the Fleet, together with Rear Admiral Viscount Kelburn, Flag Officer Malta, Capt Roaber Mackenzie, Captain D7 and Cdr Brian Shattock, FCO.

A signalman's gold badge was duly cremated in a chalice of flaming ormgig juice [spirit-based solvent used in duplicating machines at the time], and 'buried' with a suitable headstone.

Biff Burns – also known to some as magician Andy Cadabra – and a colleague set out to find the 'grave' while alone in Malta, with no luck.

"To our disappointment we found an old overgrown pub back garden full of rubble," said Biff.

"The stone had apparently been destroyed quite a few years back."

No matter – 50 years later, members of the branch will gather at Spithead on August 24 2013 in Operation Gzira.

MV Ocean Scene will set sail from Southampton's Ocean Village with 230 RN ex- and serving bunting tossers, and the classic cross flags Buntings badge will be 'buried at sea'. Cost will be £20.

Full details are on Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/buntingsafloat2013/>

More than 100 have already signed up, and places are only open to ex (or serving) members of the RN who initially passed out of training as a Signalman (Bunting).

To apply, email flagcharlie@btinternet.com and use the following format:

1. Your full name
2. Your nickname
3. Official number
4. Year you passed out of basic training as a Radio Operator 'Tactical/signalman/bunting tosser'
5. Year you left the Mob or if still serving state 'still serving'
6. Your contact telephone number
7. Your email address.

Weapons, submarines and a sing-song

TWO dozen shipmates from Bridlington branch enjoyed a day at the Royal Armouries in Leeds courtesy of a grant from the Two Ridings Community Foundation.

Shipmates toured all the sections of the museum and discussed the various weapons on display, as most had handled one or another over their service careers, ranging from 1943

to 2010.

Afterwards a few visited U-8047, a U-Boat/World War 2 British submarine replica built on a canal barge moored on the Leeds Canal.

Branch chairman S/M Martin Barmby presented a set of Dolphins to the self-styled Capt Richard Williams to add to his collection. In the ranks for the visit were members

of Scarborough branch, Bridlington RAFA, friends and family, the youngest being ten years old and the oldest 88.

Afterwards shipmates took a make-and-mend at a nearby bar that was offering happy hour prices, and sang their hearts out on the coach home, including *Heart of Oak* and *On Ilkka Moor Baht 'at*.

Jeremy is no longer standing...

AFTER almost two decades as chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, S/M Jeremy Owens has decided to stand down with effect from December this year.

The National Council of the RNA is making a public appeal for all senior appointed officials of the Association, which includes the chairmanship of the Standing Orders Committee.

Although the role is described in detail in the Charter and rules of the RNA, the National Council has outlined the essential skills and attributes required of the job:

- A close and detailed understanding of the Charter, rules and by-laws;
- "strength of character sufficient to advise the National President on controversial and difficult matters and intervene when necessary while appreciating when flexibility is appropriate";
- the ability to think quickly under pressure;
- clear and unambiguous writing style;
- the ability to speak clearly and confidently in public and to an audience.

Among the 'highly-desirable' qualities is experience in the interpretation of rules and regulations, such as legal training, or experience as a magistrate, councillor, MP or senior school governor, and experience of chairing a committee.

Depending on the individual appointed, the National Council may appoint the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee as a Vice President of the Association, which would require attendance at National Council meetings in addition to meetings deemed necessary of the committee itself.

Kenya team is reunited

VETERANS and friends of the Royal Naval Training Team Kenya descended on the Church House Inn at Rattery in Devon for their annual reunion, where tales of their service in Mombasa during the 1960s and early 1970s were dusted off and retold with suitable embellishments.

Toasts were made to Absent Friends and the Queen, a warm welcome was extended to newcomers Nigel Hall and Sue Watmore and a bouquet was presented to guest of honour Hilary Hall.

Another excellent meal was provided by landlord Ray and his staff, and the veterans thanked them for the venue and for making the evening so special.

Sun shines on Bristol festival



● HMS Cattistock at the Bristol Harbour Festival

from shipmates at both Bristol and South Gloucestershire branches.

Not only did they raise awareness of the Association amongst the good people of Bristol and beyond who visited the festival, but also raised some funds for the maritime charities

Seafarers UK and the RNBT.

Shipmates also received a few enquiries about joining the ranks of the RNA, not only from the Bristol area but also for other areas such as the Midlands and North East.

Organisers believe that this year's festival was the most successful

to date, attracting around 50,000 more than last year.

Apart from HMS Cattistock, highlights at the weekend included short cruises around the packed harbour on board the Matthew, a replica of the ship in which John Cabot sailed to America more than 500 years ago.

New agreement signed

PICTURED right are Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Charles Montgomery and RNA National President Vice Admiral John McAnally signing the new Partnering Agreement between the Royal Navy and the Royal Naval Association.

The signing took place in the Great Cabin of HMS Victory in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The agreement replaces the Memorandum of Understanding which was signed in 2008, in which free membership of the RNA was granted to all serving personnel in the Naval Service.

The new agreement reflects a much closer relationship between the Navy and the Association which has been fostered over the past couple of years, in particular on two initiatives – the Shipmates campaign, giving Service leavers a free year's membership and a personal invitation to a local branch which will provide support and contacts, and the mentoring programme, under which veterans mentor trainees at HM Ships Raleigh, Collingwood and Sultan.



Neptune AGM

THE Neptune Association is to hold their Annual General Meeting at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire on Saturday November 17.

A short service will be held at the pyramid memorial at midday followed by the meeting itself at 1.30pm in the Rose Room.

Members will remember the men lost when cruiser HMS Neptune and destroyer HMS Kandahar were mined off Libya on December 19 1941 – more than 830 sailors died, representing the Royal Navy's fifth-worst loss of life in the war.

For details see www.hmsneptune.com/news1.htm

Book early for 2013

CONFERENCE 2013 may be many months off yet – but Headquarters staff urge delegates and observers to get their bookings in promptly as the event is likely to prove popular.

The gathering is to be hosted by Area 10 in Liverpool from Friday June 14 to Monday June 17, with the conference itself taking place in a room at St George's Hall – once described by architectural scholar Nikolaus Pevsner as one of the finest neo-Grecian buildings in the world.

A special accommodation package has been arranged in the nearby Adelphi Hotel at the cost of £129 per person for three nights bed, breakfast and evening meal, the Saturday night meal being a gala dinner.

The package also includes three nights of live entertainment.

Subsidised beer prices will also be available, and during the evening the rum tub will be brought out allowing attendees to enjoy a large tot at greatly reduced prices.

The hotel is just a five-minute level walk from Lime Street station, the mainline terminus, and features a room which is a replica of RMS Titanic's first class smoking lounge.

Accommodation for this package must be booked directly with Britannia Hotels, who own the Adelphi.

Booking forms are available at the back of the RNA August circular, and also on the RNA website.

The Sunday service will take place at the Church of Our Lady and Saint Nicholas, known in the city as the Sailors' Church.

Naval Quirks



↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

↓ admin@royalnavalassoc.com

↓ 023 9272 3747

↓ www.royal-naval-association.co.uk

Flying Marine is guest speaker

A ROYAL Marines flying hero is to be guest speaker at the Wetherby branch Trafalgar Night dinner on Friday October 19.

Capt Jeff Niblett RM (Retd) was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross – the first ever awarded to a Royal Marines aviator – for his flying in the Falklands Conflict, when he was commander of a flight of six Westland Scout helicopters.

The citation read: “During the attack on Darwin and Goose Green Capt Niblett led a section of two Scout helicopters supplying ammunition and evacuating casualties, often in the thick of battle and under enemy fire.

“During one mission both Scouts were attacked by Argentinian Pucara aircraft.

“The helicopters evaded the first attack but one was subsequently shot down.

“However, with quite exceptional skill and supreme teamwork with his aircrewman, Niblett evaded three further cannon and rocket attacks, safely completing the mission.

“The superb support that his Flight as a whole gave to the landing forces reflects his exemplary and dedicated service.”

Jeff originally signed on for an RM Short Service commission, having won his Private Pilot's Licence through an RN scholarship, and he converted to the Sioux helicopter in 1975, subsequently clocking up around 2,500 hours on nine types of helicopter.

The Trafalgar Dinner will be at the Bridge Inn, Walshford.

Memorial to Arctic convoys is unveiled

A NEW memorial to veterans of the Arctic Convoys has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The memorial was commissioned and paid for privately by Phyllis Coyle, the widow of a convoy veteran, and her family – Phyllis largely used the savings she and Mick had built up to fund the project.

An appeal to raise funds for the upkeep of the memorial over the next 20 years was backed by the RNA, and National Chairman S/M Chris Dovey delivered an address at the ceremony.

More than 300 people, including veterans of the dangerous shuttle between North Russia and Western Europe – both Royal Navy and Merchant Navy – attended the event.

Writing in the RNA monthly circular, S/M Dovey said: “I found it a sobering thought, and perhaps a sign of the times, that in marching to the unveiling we passed a large new memorial to the Falklands War.

“The recognition accorded it, justifiably, and several other conflicts since far surpasses that given to the heroes of World War 2.

“The Arctic Convoys lasted for nearly four years, cost 3,000 lives and 104 merchant and 22 Naval ships, with the crews having to survive almost incessant enemy attacks in the Arctic waters and



● Phyllis Coyle addresses those who gathered for the unveiling of the new Arctic Convoys Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum

Picture: David Evans

the most arduous of weather conditions.

“Yet it required the determined efforts of a very special lady, Phyllis Coyle, and her family to provide a small but beautiful memorial to these forgotten men, without

whose efforts we may never have had the Falkland Islands to recover 40 years later.”

S/M Mick Coyle, who died in 2010, was a former Area 8 Vice President. He made two trips to Russia with other Arctic Convoys

veterans, and these veterans were very close to his heart.

It was Mick's dream to see an Arctic Convoys Memorial unveiled as well as a medal awarded for those who suffered great hardship on the convoys.

MTB plans take shape

QUOTES from boat builders and engine manufacturers have been obtained by project managers who are hoping to create a replica of a wartime motor torpedo boat (MTB).

Project 718 is planning to eventually operate a full-scale Fairmile D MTB as part of an ‘operational memorial squadron’, crewed by wartime veterans who can tell visitors the stories of the undercover missions carried out by the 15th Motor Gunboat Flotilla from 1943 to 1945.

The Flotilla carried out ‘special duties’ missions from Dartmouth in Devon, frequently crossing the English Channel to locations on the north and west coasts of Brittany.

Three engine and three hull quotes have been received – and all face quite a challenge, as not only must the boat be built to original specifications, but must also conform to all current SOLAS health and safety regulations and also be as environmentally-friendly as possible.

The engines must also not only match – or exceed – the performance of the originals, but also conform to all current and proposed engine emission regulations.

If anyone wishes to support the project they can send cheques made out to ‘The Federation of Naval Associations Project 718’ to Malcolm Tattershall, 39 Fairfield, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6JB.



● Pictured from left are Revd Mike Meachin, fund provider Fred Thurgood and standard bearer Bernie (Joe) Keane with the newly-dedicated FAA Armourers Association standard at the Chapel of St George and St Gabriel at HMS Collingwood



● Here is a rarity – three former Parade Ground Dodgers (members of the RN Medical Branch) who now parade on a voluntary and regular basis. From left, S/M Nigel Whiteley, ex-CPOMA and national standard bearer for Blind Veterans UK, S/M Roy Noble, former FCMA and national standard bearer for the RN Medical Branch and Sick Berth Staff Association, and S/M Jim Attenborough, former POMA and standard bearer for Area 7 of the RNA, pictured after the march and parade at this year's Armed Forces Day event in Plymouth

Bonzer street party

PORT Phillip branch in Australia had two reasons to make one of their meetings a special one – not only was it the branch's birthday, but it also coincided with celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee back in Britain.

Shipmates celebrated with a traditional street party, but it had to be staged indoors as it was the middle of the austral winter.

More than 80 shipmates and their guests attended, including a couple of Americans who quickly got into the spirit of things.

Hosted by former submariner chairman S/M Mike Bennett, the party featured dozens of British and Australian flags and transported everyone back to the 1950s with a screening of scenes from the Coronation.

There was a fashion parade for the best-dressed 1950s-style man and woman, a Coronation quiz, several members shared their memories of the era – and a few even took up the challenge of a karaoke session, with varying degrees of success.

On the Beaton track at the IWM

THE Imperial War Museum (IWM) London has opened a major new exhibition, Cecil Beaton: Theatre of War, exploring the impact of World War 2 on his life and work.

Beaton's wartime photographs, many of which will be seen for the first time in this exhibition, are masterpieces of composition and staging.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Information, Beaton took some 7,000 photographs between 1940 and the end of World War 2.

These little known images show Beaton adopting new methods to create a body of work that he later considered to be his most important.

From powerful, humanised portraits to abstract ruins, Beaton captured the war in a manner unlike any other photographer.

As well as photographs, the exhibition presents a selection of fascinating objects, memorabilia and film works, showing how war formed a turning point in Beaton's life and career.

Highlights include clips from wartime films for which Beaton designed costumes (including *Dangerous Moonlight*, *Kipps*, *The Young Mr Pitt* and *Major Barbara*).

Vintage magazines, documents and cameras are supplemented by Beaton's original wartime diaries, on public display for the first time.

A costume designed by Beaton for a Royal Opera House production of *Turandot* will illustrate how Beaton's wartime experiences inspired his post-war career.

Other memorable items include costume accessories worn by Dame Margot Fonteyn, a beautiful scarf signed by Sir John Gielgud and the cast of *Lady Windermere's Fan* in 1945 and Beaton's Academy awards.

Cecil Beaton is widely remembered as the leading British portrait and fashion photographer of his day, the fact that Beaton was one of Britain's hardest working war photographers during World War 2 is less well known.

He travelled extensively throughout Britain, the Middle East, India, Burma and China, photographing leaders and ordinary people, military and civilian life, industry and agriculture, artists and architecture.

His photographs from the Far East, depicting deeply traditional communities on the brink of lasting change, are ranked among the best of his career.

Beaton's photography had enormous impact in wartime, attracting worldwide attention throughout the World War 2, Beaton was the only photographer to be credited wherever and whenever his work was published.

Admission: Adults £8, Concessions £6, Children (aged 15 and under) Free. Box office 020 7416 5000, tickets are also available online, please visit: www.iwm.org.uk

Standard thanks

QUEENBOROUGH and District Naval Ensign Association would like to thank all standard bearers, associations and members who attended this year's Wildfire III Memorial Parade and Service, held on Queenborough on September 9.

They hope you all enjoyed your time with them and look forward to seeing you at next year's Wildfire III, which will take place on September 8.

For further information contact association secretary Janet Flew either by phone on 01795 229338 or email janet.flew@btinternet.com

King's Lynn open

KING'S Lynn branch is holding an open evening on Wednesday October 10 from 7pm.

The branch meets at the TS Vancouver Sea Cadets HQ at the South Quay.

All former and current Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel are welcome.

Stocksbridge donations

SHIPMATES of Stocksbridge and Deepcar branch voted to donate to the following charities: the RNBT, Alzheimers Association, Seafarers UK, Weston Park Hospital, Help for Heroes and Sheffield Sea Cadets.

A special donation will be given to the Billy the Kid Dash, an annual charity run in Thurgoland in memory of Royal Marine David Marsh, who died in Afghanistan in March 2008. All proceeds go to the Royal Marines Benevolent Fund.

The bulk of the branch's donations is provided by life member S/M Mike Clifton through plant sales at the village fete and to friends.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our August edition (right) was HMS Comus.

M McMorran, of Bathgate, was picked from the correct answers and wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery ship, above, was one of large class of mine countermeasures vessels, but as the presence of the rig in the background suggests, she spent her career on a very different task.

The Fleetlands-built ship was commissioned in February 1958, and within two weeks began her first Fishery Protection Squadron patrol – and those who served on her enclosed bridge in foul weather had cause to thank their lucky stars they were not in sister ships with open bridges.

Before she was paid off in March 1992 she had a role in clearing up the oil slick after the Torrey Canyon in 1967. What was her name?

We have removed her pennant number from the image.



Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is November 14 2012. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our December edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 212

Name

Address

My answer (1)



● Delegates take part in an active question and answer session during the MOD Welfare Conference in September

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

New man at the helm for welfare

New Minister in post... With the Cabinet reshuffle scheduled for September 5, we were told at lunch-time on September 6 that a new Minister had been appointed into the post of Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, The Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation.

By tea-time the same day the Chair of NFF, Kim Richardson, had received a personal phone call from the new Minister introducing himself and saying how delighted he was to be in post and how much he was looking forward to working with Naval Service families in the future.

During that conversation he extended an invitation to meet him and have an informal chat during the lunchtime break at the MOD Welfare Conference, the following Tuesday, September 11.

The three Families Federation Chairs met with him and had a very open discussion about what our current concerns and issues are. The Minister was engaged, enthusiastic and listened.

The next diaries meeting is on November 27, what do you want us to highlight?

This is an undiluted and 'as is' opportunity to tell the Minister what you want him to hear: admin@nff.org.uk.

New Customer Assistant Points (CAP) opening...

MHS working closely with DIO are opening new Customer Assistant Point (CAP) offices.

The CAPs are being established to support the current services provided by the Maintenance Helpdesk, with pilot offices open in Larkhill, High Wycombe and Plymouth. Plymouth CAP launched on September 18, as *Navy News* went to press.

There are further CAP's planned, the proposed locations being within reach of 80 per cent of Service Families Accommodation (SFA) for families in England (Wales and Scotland to follow).

The proposed sites being: Aldershot, Brize Norton, Catterick, Chatham, Colchester, Cosford, London, Marham, Portsmouth, Waddington and Wyton.

Further information about CAPs and their role can be found on our website: www.nff.org.uk.

Your Views Wanted: Childcare:

There is anecdotal evidence that Naval Service parents may find it challenging to fulfil their roles at work because appropriate childcare is not available. Naval Service parents can require flexible childcare provision for atypical hours.

The Royal Navy is conducting a survey in conjunction with Portsmouth City Council to determine the requirement for childcare for serving parents.

Please can you find a few moments to complete the survey, and forward the link to any other Naval Service parents you know? Data collection is for all locations, and not limited to Portsmouth.

If evidence shows that current childcare options are not meeting the requirement, the Naval Service can work with the local Authority to make appropriate childcare available.

The closing date for the survey is November 2. The survey is on-line via our website: www.nff.org.uk.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB)

Each year the Family Federations are invited to take forward families views and comments to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body; the diary date set is October 10.

The fuel for this meeting is the feedback provided by families about what considerations they have to make about mobility, spouse employment, childcare arrangements, housing aspirations, amongst a plethora of subjects, and how this impacts on the family.

The members of the AFPRB always comment that this kind of feedback 'brings alive' what it is

like to be a Naval family and really gives a rounded and complete picture of all the considerations families have to take into account as part of supporting their Service person.

What would you like us to take forward? Please get in touch: admin@nff.org.uk.

Your experiences form the basis of our discussions.

To contact the NFF:
E-mail: admin@nff.org.uk
Tel: 02392 654374.

Write to
Castaway House,
311 Twyford Avenue,
Portsmouth,
PO2 8RN.

We look forward to hearing from you.



● Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans Mark Francois MP speaks at the September MOD Welfare Conference

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward



TWO-SIX

Testing times for sailors and marines

IT WASN'T merely 16 to 18-year-olds on tenterhooks over the summer as they waited for their exam results: 200 Royal Navy sailors and Royal Marines also had fingers crossed.

Some 200 sailors and Royal Marines sat GCSE and A Level exams this summer, whether they were home in the UK, at sea or in Afghanistan, helped by the charity the Marine Society.

All those sitting A Levels passed (grade E and above), while three out of four Naval Servicemen or women who took GCSEs also passed (that's grades A through C).

The students were supported in their yearning for extra learning by the Marine Society, which helps all seafarers – merchant

and military – with professional assistance, training and education.

This year the society helped 238 seafarers to take GCSE or A Level exams this summer – 200 of them were members of the Naval Service, the rest sailors in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary or Merchant Navy.

Of the Senior Service hopefuls, most took their exams at sea, in Royal Navy Learning Centres, or, if possible, in schools and colleges close to a sailor's/marine's home.

Among the successful examinees was HMS York's PO Tom Baxter who sat his A Level psychology exam aboard the Type 42 destroyer – and earned a C for his efforts.

The senior rating had previously studied the subject at GCSE level

with the Marine Society and sat that exam whilst serving in Afghanistan.

"I learned something completely new, was able to study at my own pace and with excellent support in both my studies and in taking my exams."

"It was great to be able to do this whilst serving at sea," Tom said.

More information about the learning/exam support for the Navy and Royal Marines via the Marine Society is available at www.marine-society.org/royal-navy.aspx

● Sailors on board HMS Somerset in the Gulf last year study for exams

Picture: LA(Phot) Abbie Herron



Watch out for TwoSix

THE latest edition of *TwoSix.tv* features an NCR/DRI update, Cdr Barrand updating on divisional matters, Surface and Fleet Air Arm PR12 future equipment, the importance of Adventurous Training and the new Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity video.

The DVD has been aligned with the Personnel Support Brief to provide an enhanced package for sharing information. If you want to get your message out through these pages or the *TwoSix.tv* DVD, please contact:

■ Pauline Aquilina: 9621 85984

■ WO1 Russ Billings: 93832 5081

Pauline Aquilina is also the first point of contact for the RN Facebook site.



Where to look

DINS
DIN 2012 DIN01-190: Job Seekers Allowance condition changes for spouses/civil partners of Service personnel returning from overseas assignment

DIN 2012 DIN01-191: Change to Treatment for Pension and Redundancy Purposes of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) after Exit from Service

DIN 2012 DIN01-192: Utilisation of Defence Travel

DIN 2012 DIN01-193: Introduction of a Nuclear Competence Framework and removal of the Nuclear Propulsion and Nuclear Weapon FCFs

DIN 2012 DIN01-196: The future of Personal Accident (PAX) and Service Life Insurance (SLI)

DIN 2012 DIN01-201: MOD Non Industrial and Industrial 2012 Pay Award for grades represented by FDA, Prospect, PCS, ROA, JIPC and Line Managers

DIBS
48/12: Message to staff from new Permanent Secretary

49/12: Reminder: Outstanding civilian Performance and Development Reports to be completed by 6th September 2012

50/12: Defence Ministerial Team

51/12: A new Armed Forces Pension Scheme – end of consultation

52/12: Public support for our deployed personnel and sending gifts at Christmas

53/12: Performance awards for reporting year 2011-12 for MOD civilian staff below the Senior Civil Service (SCS)

GALAXY MESSAGES

Galaxy 26-2012: The Future Armed Forces Pension Scheme: Accrued Rights Specialist Groups and AFPS 75 members who are likely to take commutation

Galaxy 27-2012: Stand-Down Day

Induction changes at NCHQ

THE purpose of any induction programme is to welcome new staff and provide them with the information and skills that they will need to carry out their role and to contribute to the organisation's objectives, writes *Caroline McTavish*.

There are many benefits to getting this right.

It reduces the newcomers' anxiety about their new job, making the transition to the new working environment easier. It also provides the individual with the skills to be effective and efficient as quickly as possible.

Earlier in 2012 the NCHQ held a number of staff engagement workshops looking at behaviours and the way we work.

After analysing the data collected from these workshops, it was decided to review the HQ's induction process with a view to extending it.

Starting in October the Navy Command HQ induction package has been extended to one and a half days.

It is hoped that most new joiners will complete this training before they start their handover at the desk.

Although the pressure of both assignment timings and personal handover plans make this a challenge, the need for more exposure to the coaching ethos, security awareness and DII agility mean that it's worth the effort.

The Deputy Fleet Commander, as the Headquarters' Chief of Staff, has agreed this approach, acknowledging that it will pay dividends in the short and long term, providing line managers with better prepared staff right from the start of their time.

WONS in a lifetime

IT'S a great honour and achievement to become the first Warrant Officer for the Naval Service, and thereby the 'first among equals' of all the senior Warrant Officers.

The current 'WONS' is WO1 Terry Casey. He's also the first man to be appointed to the post, which was only created in 2010 when the First Sea Lord elevated the post from Second Sea Lord's Command Warrant Officer.

Mr Casey has held the appointment for the last two years through some testing times, including the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the pay freeze and the redundancy rounds.

But despite these difficulties he remains an optimist, believing that the future is bright for the Naval Service.

"I genuinely think we have turned a corner since SDSR," he said. "It was raw at the time, but down the line people can see that there is a plan, and we are going somewhere. There is genuinely a future."

Mr Casey admits he's a 'glass half-full' type, but before anyone accuses him of undue optimism, it's important to remember that his job brings him into almost daily contact with the men and women in the Service, and they are not backward in telling him what they think.

He said: "I recognise that the reasons many people tell me they joined up for in the first place – job security, a pension, a good package of care – seem under threat."

"We need to convince our middle managers, both officers and ratings, to remain positive. If we can achieve that, that positive attitude will rub off onto those junior to us."

"But I'm fully aware that the whole SDSR process has been really tough on that cohort of people. I personally went through the uncertainty of potential redundancy, it's a harrowing experience."

He added: "If I had a magic wand, I would reduce churn and uncertainty immediately. It is our greatest challenge. We are much, much busier and more operationally focused than we were 15-20 years ago, the tempo is high and the pressure on families and our people is considerable."

He explained: "When people ask me 'how is morale in the Navy?' it is a pretty big question. I find people doing their jobs

in the front line are generally the happiest and most motivated, which is as it should be."

"The further away you are from operations, the more morale tends to be knocked back a bit, and the challenge then is to keep people motivated and positive."

The recent results of the CAS, the Continuous Attitude Survey which recorded low levels of morale among some in the service, came as no surprise to him.

"Of course we saw it coming. I would have been hugely surprised if its findings were different," he said.

Mr Casey's principal role – as for all Command Warrant Officers – is to be the conduit between the non-commissioned ranks and the senior officers, explaining strategic policy, garnering the opinions of the ranks and relaying them to senior officers.

He attends the Navy Board as an observer, so making sure that the feedback and information he supplies is comprehensive, honest and accurate is a huge responsibility.

It depends heavily on face-to-face communication, so he visits every unit in a three-year rolling period.

Mr Casey travels about 90,000 miles a year to visit ships and establishments – about 70 over the last couple of years – and reads reams of paperwork on planes and trains to make sure he is familiar with strategic policy and changes.

"The post was set up to be the Admirals' eyes and ears, and there is no substitute for going on the road and getting people to open up to you," he explained.

"You have to gain the trust of the people you talk to quickly. It's important to get information, build a picture and look for trends. All the Command Warrant Officers do this and they all believe the best way to do it is face-to-face."

He added: "It is a two-way process. I have to make sure I know all the latest policy, understand it and impart it, and then return with feedback."

Navy Board Members are able to avail themselves of Mr Casey's knowledge, experience and feedback when they formulate policy. His input can make a real difference to decision-making, so it's important to get it right.

He said: "The speed of change is immense and I could not carry out my role without the absolute support of my fellow Warrant Officers."

"The Command Warrant

Officers of the fighting arms are a great group to bounce ideas off and it's important that a close link exists between my position and that of the CWOs."

He explained: "I need to know what is and what isn't important, because when you speak to Navy Board members, it's no good going in with a series of drips."

"You have to pick your battles carefully, rather than going in like a bull in a china shop."

The understanding which he brings to the Navy Board is a two-way process – he also freely informs the rating cadre what motivates the Admirals.

"I get to see that they work extremely hard, and that they genuinely want the best for the Naval Service and its people," he said.

"But at the end of the day they have got to offer operational defence to the government – it's what the taxpayers are paying for."

"It's a constant battle to balance the books and keep our most important factor, our people, content. It's a real on-going, constant tension."

He added: "The position of WONS is all about influencing those who make the big decisions and there is a lot of those on the horizon such as the Royal Naval Personnel Strategy and New Employment Model, both of which can make a real positive difference to the way the Naval Service operates in the future."

"However I also have to keep an eye on the here and now. Trying to nip a potential problem in the bud before it becomes a real concern is very much part of the day-to-day process."

"Some take longer than others to sort out, but often people are satisfied that the concern has been identified and that something is getting done about it."

"This was evidenced by the recent disquiet over the Valedictory process highlighted in the *Navy News* in May 2012."

One thing Mr Casey has no doubt about is the calibre of the recruits who represent the future of the Naval Service.

He said: "The Navy has changed hugely in the 30 years since I joined, but I'm not one who believes things were better in the old days."

"The crop of recruits we're getting now are very bright, they think differently and they are ready for the challenges of the electronic age."

He added: "The environment



Picture: LA(Phot) Arron Hoare

in which we work is very technical now. Phase 1 and Phase 2 training are preparing these people well for the rigours of a high operational tempo.

"In a nutshell the government's been good in investing in the Navy's future. They've put all this investment in new platforms and new technology, and it's up to us to make a success of them."

Mr Casey, a Welshman and keen Welsh rugby supporter, joined the Royal Navy in 1981 and became a Writer, working in shore establishments Dolphin, Daedalus and Sultan before joining his first seagoing ship, HMS Achilles.

After service in another Leander Class frigate, HMS Penelope, he joined Devonport's Command Field Gun Crew, an honour he managed to repeat three times before it ended.

His first Executive Warrant Officer job was in HMS Iron Duke and after returning to

Raleigh as the Defence Maritime Logistic School's EWO, he joined the FOST executive team and was finally selected for the new post of Warrant Officer (Naval Service) in 2010.

Mr Casey, who will leave the Royal Navy in about 12 months' time, said: "Every sailor, regardless of how senior or how junior they are, would have been through some tough times but we all remember the good times, particularly when we are just about to leave."

"It really is all about people you meet; ships, submariners and aircraft are pieces of metal, people put the life and soul into these units."

He added: "It's been an unbelievable career in which I've always felt supported by my family and the divisional chain."

"Finishing as the Warrant Officer of the Naval Service is the icing on the cake."

Return to Contingency

THIS has been another busy year for the RN Medical Services (RNMS) with world wide deployments as well as providing support to events much closer to home.

At this time last year the RNMS were once again leading the medical element of Herrick 14.

Although the majority of the posts were filled by RNMS staff we have to mention the invaluable support from the RM Band Service and the Logistics Branch who provide the critical logistical and support functions.

Although having an extremely heavy Naval Service feel there were also Army, RAF and civilian personnel supporting the Medical Group ensuring only the highest standards of care were delivered.

From a career management perspective the day-to-day running of the 'medical plot' continues apace.

However, it is the Force Generation for Return to Contingency that has been main effort for the RN Medical Service recently.

RN staff have been taking



Drafty's corner

lessons learnt in recent ops and successfully applied and adapted them to the unique maritime environments we are more commonly associated with.

This has been carried out at a time of change with the recent Tranche 2 Redundancies causing temporary gaps.

Despite this churn the normal RNMS business of providing

medical support to Fleet, 3 Commando Brigade and bases has continued.

Our Medical Officers, Nurses, Medical Assistants and Allied Health Professionals have been fulfilling a multitude of tasks across the world;

The Primary Casualty Receiving Facility had a successful exercise in March this year demonstrating it is clinically ready to deliver R2 support whilst getting a coveted BZ from the FOST team assessing the NBCD preparedness of the complex.

The Commando Forward Surgical Group have been busy as well, deploying on several exercises; preparing to be a part of the Cougar 12 supporting elements of 3 Commando.

The Role 2 Afloat Team spent Christmas off the Horn of Africa. This tasking saw them supporting anti-piracy boarding operations as well as providing medical and surgical care to the task group.

Over the past year a high number of the RNMS have deployed to Op Herrick mainly as Individual Augmentees.

This on top of medical personnel assigned to other operations, such as the UKMCC in Bahrain and Role 1 and Role 2 medical care afloat means we are an extremely busy service with little change in sight.

We also have to mention the RNMS staff who deployed to Op Olympic over the summer.

Many deployed at a few hours notice yet managed to go and deliver their usual high levels of care whilst representing the Royal Navy to world wide acclaim.

Now a plea from the team.

Due to the high operational tempo and requirement to move people at short notice here we would like to ask all RNMS staff to:

■ Keep JPA updated. Not just personal details but ensure your competencies are correctly recorded and your preferences are updated

■ be in date for your RNFT on the Common Reporting Date and if you are selected be in date on the Common Promotion Date.

The Career Management team have gone through some churn over recent months with

the SO2, CPONN and Sgt all changing.

CM NAHP Contacts:
 ■ Cdr George Finn, SO1 CM NAHP: 93832 8854

■ Surg Cdr (D) David Hall, SO1 OCM Den: 93832 8731

■ Surg Cdr Fleur Marshall, SO1 OCM Med: 93832 8816

■ Miss Elaine Wood, OCM Med EA: 93832 8817

■ Lt Cdr Steve Brodie, SO2 RCM NAHP: 93832 8975

■ CPONN Heather Johnson, REM DEN CPO: 93832 8733

■ CPONN Russ Watson, RCM NAHP CPO: 93832 8990

■ Sgt Daz Smith, RCM NAHP PO: 93832 3520

■ Logs Rachel Ozols, RCM NAHP AB: 93832 8982

West Battery

MP1-1

Whale Island

Portsmouth

PO2 8DX

Finally the RNMS will continue to provide medical care in both operational theatres as and when required. Volunteers are always welcome and should contact their respective Career Managers to discuss future opportunities.

Russian ‘vice admiral’ visits Portsmouth

“WHERE did you learn to speak Russian?” The question, put by a young lieutenant of Russia’s Northern Fleet’s marines, was matter-of-fact and asked with a smile, *writes Mike Williams*.

We were talking onboard the Russian anti-submarine warfare destroyer Vice-Admiral Kulakov, during her goodwill visit to Portsmouth. She was returning home from successful anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean.

She arrived in Portsmouth harbour on August 24 and was open to the public from 12 noon until 4pm on Sunday, August 26. Over 20,00 people visited her.

An Udaloy (‘Bold’) class destroyer, she was commissioned in 1982, but underwent extensive modernisation over many years.

Typically Russian, with sharply-raked bow and bristling with weapons, she made an impressive sight in her dark grey finish. Flying at her flight-deck stern was the Russian naval ensign – the blue cross of St Andrew on a white background.

Immediately astern of her, in contrasting light-grey Royal Navy livery, were two Type 45 Daring-class destroyers, HMS Defender and HMS Dragon. Below her flight deck, her blunt stern appeared to consist of a huge ramp from which small inshore assault craft carrying naval infantry (marines) could be readily launched.

Mounted forward are two 100mm radar-directed guns in old-fashioned super-firing configuration. Behind these, in angled silos, are 8 (2x4) SS-N-14 Silex anti-submarine missiles and a further 75 missiles of various types.

She carries several 30mm AA guns and what look to be the Russian equivalent of the Phalanx



close-defence system. Her rear hangar houses two Ka-27 ‘Helix’ helicopters. Fully laden, with a complement of 300, she weighs 7,900 tons and is 163 metres in length.

Used to British frigates of the 1950s I had little real basis for comparison, but I was surprised by the large number of officers and senior rates who were very much in evidence throughout the vessel.

Apart from one petty officer I saw absolutely no one in square-rig.

As was to be expected in a ship engaged in anti-piracy operations, there were many marines around – some in their ‘number-ones’ and others on guard duty, carrying AKM assault rifles and wearing olive-drab fatigues. Others, mostly ashore close by, wore camouflage combat suits.

Like the young English-speaking, highly professional marine lieutenant with whom I spoke at some length, I did wonder if these latter were Spetsnaz naval infantry. Who knows? Perhaps my

former Cold War, ex-RN Sigint and ex-RM SBS nose was just working in overdrive...

The officers coped with a busy schedule of civic engagements in Portsmouth and, together with Russian Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko, met with Lord Mayor Frank Jonas and British war veterans, from HMS Illustrious, to lay wreaths at the Guildhall Square Cenotaph.

As a Russian-speaker I was made to feel most welcome, as I used the opportunity to inflict my mangled grammar on several of the ship’s company.

The atmosphere onboard, on the ship’s open-day, was relaxed and convivial.

It would be difficult not to be impressed by the Russians as friendly hosts, their smart turnout and the thoroughly ship-shape state of the Vice-Admiral Kulakov.

For two very happy hours I was able to enjoy being both a sailor and a ‘Royal’ once again and to acknowledge a warship’s quarterdeck, for only the second time in over half-a-century.

Black History day at Naval Museum

THE NATIONAL Museum of the Royal Navy at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard is inviting visitors to join them to celebrate black history and discover more about the Royal Navy’s links to different countries around the world at a special event on Saturday October 6.

Kiri Anderson, Diversity Projects Officer at the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) explains: “The Royal Navy was at the frontier of international exploration – they met new and different people, experiencing new foods, traditions and values as they moved on. They carried these experiences from place to place, inheriting an understanding of different people and cultures as they went.

“Following the success of our ‘Chasing Freedom’

exhibition (which focuses on the Royal Navy’s crucial role in the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade) we are eager to continue promoting diversity throughout the museum, both in our exhibitions and visiting audiences.”

The Multicultural Day will investigate cultural artefacts from the NMRN collections, help visitors to find out about Nelson’s multicultural navy and hear accounts of first contact, plus share new experiences of crafts, food and music to stimulate the senses and reflect the diversity embedded in British culture.

Today, the Royal Navy’s work in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Oceania is vital; coastal patrols, intervention during civil unrest and relief aid during natural disasters saves millions of lives.

Trophy lives

IN October 1942 the 12th Destroyer Flotilla – comprising HM Ships Dulverton, Hero, Hurworth, Pakenham and Petard – was conducting anti-submarine operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, together with Vickers Wellesley bombers from 47 Squadron RAF.

During the night of October 29-30 the group detected an enemy U-Boat and conducted a skilful attack which led to the submarine, U-559, being forced to the surface.

Having carried out four attacks, Petard engaged the enemy and eventually managed to take the boat in tow.

During the attacks and the subsequent surface action seven of U-559’s crew lost their lives while the remaining 38 were captured.

Although it was likely that the damaged U-Boat would founder, at about 1am on October 30, Petard’s First Lieutenant, Lt Anthony Fasson, together with Able Seaman Colin Grazier swam to and boarded her.

Their aim was to recover “anything of interest” and quite quickly they found several such papers in the boat’s Control Room.

These were passed to a third member of Petard’s crew on the submarine’s conning tower, and they then realised that there were other papers and publications – including the Short Signal and Short Weather Signal (or *Wetterkurz-schlusel*) Books – which might relate to the German Enigma encrypting equipment.

Despite warnings given by the third man that the submarine was definitely sinking they both went back into the vessel; the retrieved



books and papers being passed up to the conning tower.

The foundering of the submarine was now clearly imminent and sadly neither Lt Fasson nor AB Grazier was able to make his escape.

However, the captured documents were passed to the British code-breaking centre at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire where they made a significant

contribution to the eventual cracking of the Enigma codes.

Posthumous George Crosses were subsequently awarded to both of them, with that of Able Seaman Grazier being **Trophy No 15157**.

The citation reads:

Able Seaman Colin Grazier P/S SX 25550 G.C.

Able Seaman Grazier of HMS Petard was awarded the GC (Posthumous) for Outstanding Bravery and Steadfast devotion to Duty in the face of Danger during an Action on 30th October 1942. The Award was Gazetted on 14th September 1943.

On 30th October HMS Petard together with other ships of the 12th Destroyer Flotilla carried out a most successful and skilful hunt in Mediterranean waters culminating in the destruction of Enemy Submarine U559.

During the course of the action in which HMS Petard carried out four attacks, the U-Boat surfaced.

HMS Petard engaged her and finally took her in tow. A party was put aboard led by a Lieutenant, who, together with AB Grazier went down into the Submarine to obtain information, a task they knew to be extremely dangerous as the Submarine was sinking fast.

AB Grazier, who followed the 1st Lieutenant over the side, boarded the U-Boat with him in the shortest possible time.

He stayed below working in the darkness with the water rising and knowing the submarine to be holed until too late to escape – thus giving his life in his eagerness to get vital information.



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● WO2 Ceri Lewis

Award for Ceri

A ROYAL Marines Warrant Officer has been honoured for his role as a welfare officer.

WO2 Ceri Lewis, welfare officer for 42 Commando RM at Bickleigh Barracks in Plymouth, was awarded the MBE for his work over the past 13 years, supporting RM units and their families.

Ceri said: "I'm humbled and honoured. This is really recognition for the whole Royal Marines welfare team, who do so much to support the troops and their families, especially when units are deployed to places like Afghanistan."

He joined the Corps in 1975 and has seen service around the world, including providing humanitarian support in Bosnia.

He said one of his most rewarding jobs was training recruits at Lympstone, where he helped them earn their green berets on one of the toughest military courses in the world.

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool



Ballet break for officer

HMS OCEAN may have been busy guarding the Paralympics, but one member of her crew swapped the Games for an all together different venue – the Boston Ballet School.

Lt Anna Sanocki, 30 (pictured above), secured one of 25 places on the school's prestigious summer programme on the back of her ten years as an amateur ballerina.

Anna, who took up ballet at university, spent two weeks in Boston studying and training before resuming her post as an Officer of the Watch in Ocean.

"There are a lot more ballet schools in America than there are in the UK, and it's much more common for adults to do ballet over there," said Anna, who is also ticked Boston off her personal list of must-visit locations.

When the opportunity to go to Boston came up, Anna was encouraged to apply by Ocean's CO, Capt Andrew Betton.

She said: "Initially I was a bit nervous about bringing it up, because I knew about our tasking for the Olympics and how busy we were likely to be.

THE crew of submarine HMS Talent staged a special day to show appreciation to friends and relatives who supported them through recent patrols.

About 130 friends and family attended a day to celebrate the 130-strong crew's achievements with a formal parade after the Trafalgar-class boat returned to her home base of Devonport.

The submarine is affiliated with Shrewsbury, and the town's mayor, Cllr Keith Roberts, was guest of honour.

The event gave the guests a chance to meet the whole crew, including CO Cdr John Aitken, who thanked the visitors formally at the parade and informally face-to-face when they were treated to a cricket competition and barbecue.

Cdr Aitken said: "Successful submarines are born of successful teams, and that team extends not only inside the steel of the hull, but into the family home."

The day also provided details of contacts and support during periods of absence, and how relatives and friends can communicate – albeit in a limited way – with the sailors while they are at sea.

The submarine has had a busy year so far, with work-up and training in the UK in the early months followed by a deployment to the South Atlantic which included a visit to South Africa.



● Crew members of HMS Talent during Divisions at Devonport

The time in between included intensive maintenance periods.

The parade featured an awards ceremony to recognise sailors who were outstanding in their contribution to the deployment and for general excellence.

CPO Steven Mathews received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for 15 years meritorious service.

Steven joined the Navy in 1997 as a Marine Engineering Mechanic specialising in mechanical systems.

He immediately volunteered for the Silent Service, serving in HM Submarines Tireless, Valiant and Trenchant before being selected for an engineering course in 2008.

Since completing this artificer training CPO Mathews has served in Talent, his current role being marine engineering technician of the watch.

As head of the auxiliaries section, CPO Mathews has been instrumental in ensuring Talent completed her maintenance and regeneration programme on time.

Cdr Aitken said: "Throughout this very busy period he has been fully supported by his soon-to-be-wife Elizabeth and son Charlie.

"A credit to his family and an

asset to the Submarine Service, CPO Mathews has a long and illustrious career ahead of him."

LS WS(TSM) Robert Carter-Lovell received the Man of the Boat Award, an award for his contribution to success of the submarine and its crew.

LS Carter-Lovell, aged 31, has been in the Royal Navy for 14 years, with the best part of the last seven years serving in Talent.

One of the hardest ranks on board any submarine is leading hand, where an individual has to maintain fairness and discipline amongst his juniors but still be respected within the junior rates.

This becomes doubly hard when they take on extra responsibility for the junior rates, a role which Robert has had for two years.

During the maintenance period Robert worked with outside authorities to install a multi-media system which benefits all the ranks when they are relaxing at sea.

This was largely conducted by him outside working hours with his only aim to make Talent's crew's days at sea more enjoyable.

Robert said: "I am so proud to receive this award. I have been in the submarine for seven years and

had time to get things right in the junior rates mess.

"We've just had an enjoyable deployment to South Africa and I'm looking forward to the next one."

Cdr Aitken said: "He has given his all to Talent.

"For the most part awards are given to individuals who have done a great thing, but recognition should also be given to the people who make lots of small yet significant efforts that amount to a great thing.

"This award is made in recognition of his outstanding devotion to his submarine and his shipmates."

The parents of Lt Andrew Pariser, Jackie and Philip, travelled from Cheshire to see the parade.

Jacki said: "It is fantastic to see him in this ceremony. The last time we saw him at an event like this was about seven years ago when he passed out from Dartmouth.

"It's great that the Navy does this for the families and the crew, to see where he works and who he works with.

"It's real recognition that they deserve and all us families appreciate it."

Picture: LA(Phot) Martin Garney



● Lt Cdrs Jim Screen (left) and Alistair Browne

Tiffies back together

TWO Naval officers found themselves working together again in Afghanistan, almost 30 years after they met as Artificer Apprentices at HMS Fisgard.

Lt Cdrs Jim Screen and Alistair Browne joined in September 1982.

And although their careers diverged considerably, their paths crossed once again in Camp Bastion this year where they both worked in Joint Force Support.

Alistair left the RN some time ago, but joined the RNR as a CIS officer.

He is currently on a six-month tour in a role which uses his wealth of civilian IT experience.

He said: "This is the first time I've worked in joint environment, and when I joined the RNR I certainly didn't expect to be deployed by the Navy to a land-locked country..."

"However, I've settled into the role out here and have found many areas where I can make a difference and add value."

He was quite surprised to meet Jim and didn't recognise him at first.

"When I first saw Jim, I thought he looked vaguely familiar.

"I only really recognised him when I saw him with his hat on – the last time I saw him, he had a full head of hair!"

Jim said: "I recognised Alistair immediately.

"He's barely changed in 30 years, though I can't believe it's been that long. My recollections of Fisgard are similar to his, but I suppose my abiding thought is that today you couldn't get away with the kind of things that went on then!"

Until the end of 1983, HMS Fisgard, which was opposite HMS Raleigh in Torpoint, Cornwall, was the New Entry establishment for Artificer Apprentices.

Jim and Alistair remember a hard life as a 'sprog', with early morning runs, kit musters (which had to be perfect), challenging PT lessons and regular dunkings in the 'static tanks' for those who didn't toe the line.

After Fisgard they were drafted to HMS Collingwood where they completed their training as WE Artificers.

(Wild)life in the Falklands

THIRTY years ago the Falkland Islanders were piecing their lives back together after the Argentinian invasion.

But 30 years ago Karen Campbell was not particularly bothered by thoughts of the windswept South Atlantic archipelago, being a mere babe in arms.

Fast forward three decades and Karen is something of an expert on the British Overseas Territory now as she approaches the end of a six-month deployment.

Karen (pictured right), from the little village of Kirkcolum near Stranraer, Dumfries and Galloway, in South West Scotland, is currently serving as a Royal Navy Medic at Mount Pleasant Air Base.

She joined the 1,200-strong military contingent at Mount Pleasant, on East Falkland in the austral autumn (our spring) just as things started to get busy with visitors attending commemorations for the 30th anniversary of the conflict.

There has been much more activity than usual, especially in support of the islanders, who are very appreciative of the help that the military personnel at Mount Pleasant offer to them.

Karen regularly cares for sick

and injured soldiers, sailors and airmen, but she has also assisted locals either at the air base or as part of the hospital in Port Stanley.

She also gets to spend time travelling and exploring the vast islands.

"The absolute best thing about being on the islands is the scenery, the wildlife, penguins, sea lions and dolphins," she said.

Despite the demands of her job she has been able to see plenty of the local fauna.

"We had the opportunity to go out in a RIB and see the dolphins, seals and birds such as cormorants," said Karen.

"We also visited Sea Lion Island where there were large elephant seals and smaller seals.

"There were also various kinds of penguins, which were very funny to watch."

There are drawbacks to life in the South Atlantic – it is a long, long way from the nearest McDonalds for example.

An interesting part of Karen's role is getting to work in, and visit places like, Port Stanley.

She has taken patients to hospital, and also got the chance to visit some of the shops and try the local cuisine – and, of course,



Picture: Sgt Martin Coleman (RAF)

visit the few bars in the capital.

"Some of the beaches around the area are lovely, where there are shipwrecks and white sands and pure blue/green waters," said Karen.

"The locals are very kind people, and are always pleasant. They work alongside us in various departments at Mount Pleasant and are always keen to help."

Even though the Falkland

Islands are almost 8,000 miles from Scotland Karen still keeps in regular contact with family and friends back home.

"Everyone will be excited to see me come back home," she said "I regularly Skype my family – that way I can see them and catch up on what is happening at home."

Karen's mother sends her parcels with home baking, which she shares with the medical centre staff, who enjoy the cakes as much as she does.

Karen has thoroughly enjoyed her time at Mount Pleasant, which she describes as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit the islands and experience all they have to offer.

She has also taken the opportunity to absorb the events of 1982, which she describes as being a very important part of history and crucial to the future of the Falkland Islands.

"I'm very much looking forward to going home, and getting back to normal life," she said.

"However, I'll take away with me some fantastic memories and some very close friends.

Karen's next scheduled posting will be considerable closer to home – less than 80 miles north at HMS Neptune on the Clyde.

● The Perrott Hill choir



Choir is all set for Rome

There is a palpable sense of excitement at Perrott Hill and in the Music Department in particular. The choir, under their Director of Music, Trevor Barr, is currently preparing for a trip to Rome.

A choir of 30 voices with over 70 supporters will fly from Heathrow on Sunday October 14 with the climax of the trip being singing for the Mass at St Peter's Basilica on Wednesday October 17 at 5pm.

Trevor Barr, who has had previous experience in taking choirs to St Peter's, said: "It will be an amazing time for the boys and girls in the choir."

"It is the kind of experience that makes all those hours of rehearsal worthwhile and one that our pupils will relate to their children in years to come."

The children will have the opportunity to climb to the top of the dome in St Peter's to enjoy its fantastic views down into the Basilica and across the city; they

will also visit the Castle of the Angels and the world famous Vatican Museum.

Other highlights of their trip will be a visit to the Coliseum where their tour guide will be Perrott Hill's Head of Latin, Oliver Patrick.

Rob Morse, Headmaster at Perrott Hill, is also joining the trip and is delighted to be able to offer the children this opportunity.

"It will be an amazing experience and the trip is testimony to the enthusiasm, drive and passion for music at Perrott Hill. My congratulations and best wishes go to Trevor Barr and all the pupils."

The children, of course, are most excited. They are, however, experienced performers having already taken part in the Orchestra in a Field at Glastonbury earlier this summer.

The whole school wishes the choir from Perrott Hill well with their trip to Rome and looks forward to hearing of their success.

● Queen's College



Queen's College tops the tables

QUEEN'S College is the top academic school in Taunton based on this year's A-level and GCSE results.

With nearly 80 per cent of A-level papers gaining the sought after A*, A and B grades needed for places at top universities and all successful Oxbridge students being able to confirm their places, the school really is flying high.

"We are a warm and caring school community, committed to fulfilling the potential of each individual. We aim for excellence and high standards in all our activities," said Headmaster Chris Alcock.

"It's very important to me that I still do some classroom teaching and I make it my business to know and support each and every pupil in the school."

The school is also well known for excellent results in the creative and performing arts with three art students this year going onto the Oxbridge of the art world, Central St Martin's.

Other students have gone onto drama schools such as the Bristol

Old Vic and the facilities for drama and dance are exceptional.

There is a wide variety of musical groups on offer in school and talented musicians are, in addition, encouraged to become members of external groups such as the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and to take part in international music tours.

Surrounded by the beautiful Exmoor and Dartmoor national parks, it is not surprising that Queen's is a centre of excellence for outdoor pursuits with opportunities for students to ride, canoe, dive, sail and mountain bike.

Sport is strong too with national success in hockey, horse riding, athletics and swimming and a new Hockey Academy led by Olympic athlete, Ian Haley, is due to launch in September.

Open Day will be on Saturday October 6 from 9.30 to 12 noon.

Contact admissions@queenscollege.org.uk or telephone 01823 272559 for more details or to arrange an individual visit.



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Dundee hosts regatta

MORE than 60 cadets from across Scotland and Northumberland gathered at Dundee Training Centre for the Northern Area boat-handling championships.

The cadets, from as far afield as Orkney and Gateshead, were put through a series of boat-handling skills, including sailing, pulling and driving powerboats.

Each team was assessed and marked on their knowledge, competence and ability, and the standard in all three elements was exceptionally high.

Fife and Tayside were awarded gold and the pulling trophy, **Grampian** were awarded gold and the sailing trophy while **Northumberland** received gold for their powerboat skills.

The overall champions for 2012 were **Grampian**.

Cadets were presented with their medals by Area Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Stewart RNR.

"The effort made by the cadets, during their training and with some units travelling a fair distance to take part, is outstanding," said Lt Cdr Stewart.

"The dedication of the staff and cadets is second to none.

"It is a pleasure to see such a high level of achievement."

RNA pay for training on Royalist

THREE cadets from **Plymouth Manadon** unit found themselves on the high seas aboard sail training ship **TS Royalist** at Plymouth – thanks to RN veterans.

The cadets – Charles Cavanagh, aged 14 (on his second voyage), Grace Allum and Sophie Brown, both aged 15 and starting out on their maiden voyage – joined the ship for the start of a six-day training cruise.

Royalist, the Corps flagship which was launched in 1971, is a square-rigged 83-ton brigantine with an overall length of almost 30 metres, owned and operated by the Marine Society & Sea Cadets – the parent charity of the Sea Cadet Corps.

She carries a permanent crew of eight and has accommodation for up to 24 cadets under training.

All three Manadon cadets were sponsored by the Plymouth branch of the Royal Naval Association (RNA), members of which were looking forward to hearing all about the voyage.



● Cardiff Sea Cadets at full pelt during a field gun run at Cardiff Castle earlier this year

Cardiff to take on more field gun rivals

CARDIFF unit took the majority of the spoils at this year's showpiece field gun event – but are hoping for even tougher competition next year.

The cadets were busy over the main Armed Forces Day weekend in the Welsh capital, putting on a demonstration display followed by a full-blooded competition.

A Beat Retreat ceremony at Cardiff Castle gave the youngsters a chance to put on a slow-time run-through of their field gun drill, allowing onlookers to see the skills and timing required for a successful and safe run.

They followed that with a full-speed run which impressed the watching dignitaries, including unit patron Capt Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards.

During the main Armed Forces Day event, the field gun competition saw Cardiff pit themselves against HMS Collingwood Voluntary Cadet Corps over three rounds at the Castle's Cooper's Field.

The competition, based on the drill used in the Portsmouth Area Voluntary Cadet Corps event, requires 19-strong mixed crews to race and manhandle the seven-pounder gun and limber, weighing almost half a ton, over a 170-yard course.

There are a number of drills to complete along the way, such as bodily lifting pieces of the kit, changing wheels from gun to limber and vice versa.

Watched by Battery Commander CWEM(O)

Mike Dixon and Chief Judge Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows, TS Cardiff took the Percy Scott (Aggregate Time) Cup and the Hedworth Lambton (Fastest Time) Cup while HMS Collingwood returned home to Fareham with the Hall-Thompson (Fewest Penalties) Cup.

Trophies were presented by Capt Brian Thorne of HMS Cambria.

It is hoped that next year will see four teams competing for honours.

Field gun competition developed as homage to the heroic efforts of the Naval Brigade in the Second Boer War, when makeshift heavy artillery was dragged across miles of rough terrain to help relieve besieged British forces at Ladysmith.

Dragon proves a major draw

CADETS from across **Northern Ireland** gathered in Belfast to visit one of the Royal Navy's newest warships.

HMS Dragon has been on a hectic programme of gunnery, missile and aviation exercises, and paid a courtesy visit to the port at the end of one phase of that programme.

Because the visit was brief, the destroyer did not throw her doors open to the public – but an invitation went out to Sea Cadet units to join a hosted tour of the ship, which proved popular.

Dragon's CO, Cdr Darren Houston, said: "I am delighted to be visiting the City of Belfast.

"The historical ties between the Royal Navy and the city make this a popular destination for ships."

The visit by Dragon also gives a hint of what is to come – Belfast is affiliated to Duncan, the final of the six Type 45s, which is currently in the final stages of build on the Clyde.



● Junior Cadet 1 Zhara Hunter at the helm of Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon in Belfast, watched over by Lt Terri Brain and Zhara's fellow Sea Cadets from across Northern Ireland
Picture: Robbie Hodgson

Former cadet musicians star in band ceremony

THE image (right) shows the front rank of Buglers from the Royal Marines School of Music at the Open Day Ceremony of Beating Retreat at the Guildhall in Portsmouth.

The fledgling musicians performed in front of an audience which included Guest of Honour the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Sir Charles Montgomery, and the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Frank Jonas.

Why is the front rank of the group of particular interest?

Well, of the seven featured – four trainees and three instructors – six were until recently members of the Sea Cadet Corps.

From left to right, the former cadets are: Bugler Bryn Hawkins (**High Wycombe** unit), Bugler Glen McGovern (**Reigate**), Bugler Daryl Williams (**Tunbridge Wells**), Cpl Bugler Helen Annett (**Harrogate**), Bugler Paxton (not SCC), Bugler Steve Taylor (**High Wycombe**) and Bugler Kim Hare (**Harrogate**).

The Sea Cadet Corps is proud of such a success rate, and believes



it is testament to the outstanding help and engagement that Corps bands get from the RM Band Service.

The fact that the Royal Marines are also picking up such talented young musicians proves that the benefit is not just one way.

And in case you were wondering, bugler is a rank in the RM Band Service, not a precise definition of what the musician plays.

In the RM Band Service, buglers play both the bugle and the military side drum – as is the case in this image.

Pride in the charity

THE former head of Navy training and recruitment has spoken of his pride at being a trustee of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets.

Rear Admiral John Borley is now Director General Facilities at the Palace of Westminster (see page 26).

And his only formal connection with dark blue uniforms now is that trusteeship.

"When I was Flag Officer Training and Recruitment I had the Sea Cadet budget in my area and I put quite a lot of thinking into restructuring our relationship with the Marine Society and Sea Cadets," he said.

"So I was very pleased when I was invited to be a trustee, because it is a very impressive organisation.

"When I was in the Navy I appreciated very much the fact

that the Cadets showed the Naval presence around the country.

"Now I am a trustee I do see it rather differently – I see the wonderful experience and opportunities Sea Cadets provide for young people, from a very wide range of backgrounds.

"The jewel in our crown is very much sending them offshore, which is a wonderful, broadening experience for them.

"I think all of the trustees share a great joy and pride in what charity offers to young people, through the hard work and dedication of our marvellous volunteers.

"The Sea Cadets do a really, really good community service – they sit right slap bang in the middle of the Prime Minister's Big Society. It is an exemplar, and I am very proud to be part of it."

23 in a row for Wallsend

WALLSEND unit has just added another burgee to its collection – and an impressive collection it is.

For the Tyneside unit's latest success is their 23rd consecutive burgee, stretching back to 1990.

With only the top 25 per cent of units achieving this standard, Wallsend's record is no mean feat.

OiC CPO (SCC) Andy Scott said: "I am extremely proud of

every member of the unit, and would like to thank the staff for their tireless work in training the cadets, and continually maintaining the high standards of Wallsend unit."

And with a special diamond adornment on this year's burgee to mark the Queen's Jubilee, the unit is even more pleased to have kept their winning streak going.

Lochaber features in TV film

THE cadets of **Lochaber** unit are to be one of the subjects of a German television documentary programme to be screened round Europe later this year.

While Sea Cadet organisations can be found in many countries round the world, apparently you won't find one in Germany.

Mare TV was making a film about the Caledonian Canal and heard about the successful Sea Cadet unit which is based at the western end of the canal.

Michael McGlinn, a film-maker based in Hamburg, said: "We were researching possible subjects for our documentary when we heard about the Sea Cadet unit in Fort William, and we felt that it was something we really wanted to show.

"We've been very impressed with the young people and have had great fun meeting them."

The film crew spent an evening filming the cadets in the unit carrying out the Colours ceremony at the beginning of the evening and learning about seamanship and chartwork.

A day was also spent on the water filming the cadets rowing and power boating in what turned out to be ideal weather conditions.

Courtney Croll, a cadet who has just joined the unit, said: "It was amazing – the best thing I've ever done!"

AC Margaret Maciver said: "The film crew really made us feel at ease when they were filming us. "They were really easy to work with."

AC Sarah Whyton said: "It was good fun showing the film crew exactly what we are all about," while AC Chloe Elder observed: "It's a shame that they don't seem to have Sea Cadets in Germany – they don't know what they're missing!"

Tina Calder, chairperson of the unit, said: "We've always had a very good working relationship with the Canal staff.

"They've been very supportive and we've been able to do some really good activities on the water. "The Caledonian Canal itself is a tremendous local asset and it's ideal for our rowing activities.

"When the money allows we even take the cadets on weekend cruises along some sections of it.

"Not only do we use the canal, but other Sea Cadet units come from all over the country to use it, and so it was brilliant that Mare TV wanted to film the local unit.

"Hopefully, the documentary will not only tell European audiences what we do, but it may also encourage some visitors to come and see the place for themselves."

More trophies and awards

ROUNDING up the final Sea Cadet Corps Trophies and Awards 2011-12:

Amaryllis Trophy: **Carrickfergus** (Northern Ireland), **Ballymena** (Northern Ireland);

Northern Ireland Trophy: **Belfast Eagle**;

Captain's Certificate of Commendation: **Barnsley** (East), **King's Lynn** (East), **Stevenage** (East), **Skelmersdale** (North West), **Guernsey** (South), **Teign Valley** (South West);

Gibraltar Cup contenders 2012: **Bedford** (East), **Hornchurch** (London), **South Shields** (North), **St Helens** (North West), **Eastbourne** (South), **Bristol Adventure** (South West);

Navy Board Cadets for 2012: POC Keira Yeoman (**Kettering**, East), POC Casey Brown (**Walton-on-the-Naze**, London), POC Caera Kimmitt (**Helensburgh**, Northern), POC Jessica Anderson (**Fleetwood**, North West), POC Reece Oliver (**Poole**, South), POC Rhys Tanner (**Portland**, South West).

High and dry but effective

YOU do not have to be a coastal unit to make a mark at watersports, as **Buxton** unit has proved.

The unit's dinghy specialists took the honours at the **North West Area** sailing competition, winning the Pico and Bosun classes and taking second place in the Toppers.

Lining up against them were around 60 other units, many located close to the sea – something of a testament to the training received by Buxton cadets at Errwood Sailing Club in the Goyt Valley, located in the Peak District National Park, and sitting almost 300m above sea level.

The unit has also thanked all those who supported recent fundraising events, in particular the sponsored walk, organised by Buxton Lions, which raised over £400.

The unit is looking forward to opening its new extension and would like to invite those who made it possible, and former cadets, to join current staff and cadets for the occasion.

For more details on the event please contact the unit on buxtonseacadets@yahoo.co.uk, giving brief details or your connection.

No date has yet been set for the opening.

Destination Surrey

SEVEN units from **London Southern District** converged on the Surrey countryside near Guildford for the district expedition training competition.

There was strong competition in the event, which involved teams of six.

Activities included map and compass work, campcraft and cooking, physical activity (including a route march and obstacle course) and many leadership and teamwork tasks.

At the end of a busy weekend, **Bromley** unit pipped **Southwark** unit to the honours, and these two were due to represent **London Southern** at the **London Area Choisin Cup** competition as *Navy News* went to press.



Golden Victory

IT HAD taken plenty of hard work, but one summer's day saw five scouts from the **30th Norwich Sea Scouts** enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity whilst on their annual summer camp.

Visiting the Lyons Copse Solent Scout Training Centre at Shedfield in Hampshire had taken a lot of planning, as had the notion of where and how the top scouting award could be presented.

Royal Navy personnel picked up the group from their campsite and took them to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The scouts enjoyed the fine weather on a harbour tour and a visit to HMS Alliance, then headed for HMS Victory.

They lined up at Nelson's flagship tingling with anticipation.

Then there were huge smiles and a massive sense of pride as the news emerged – the 100th

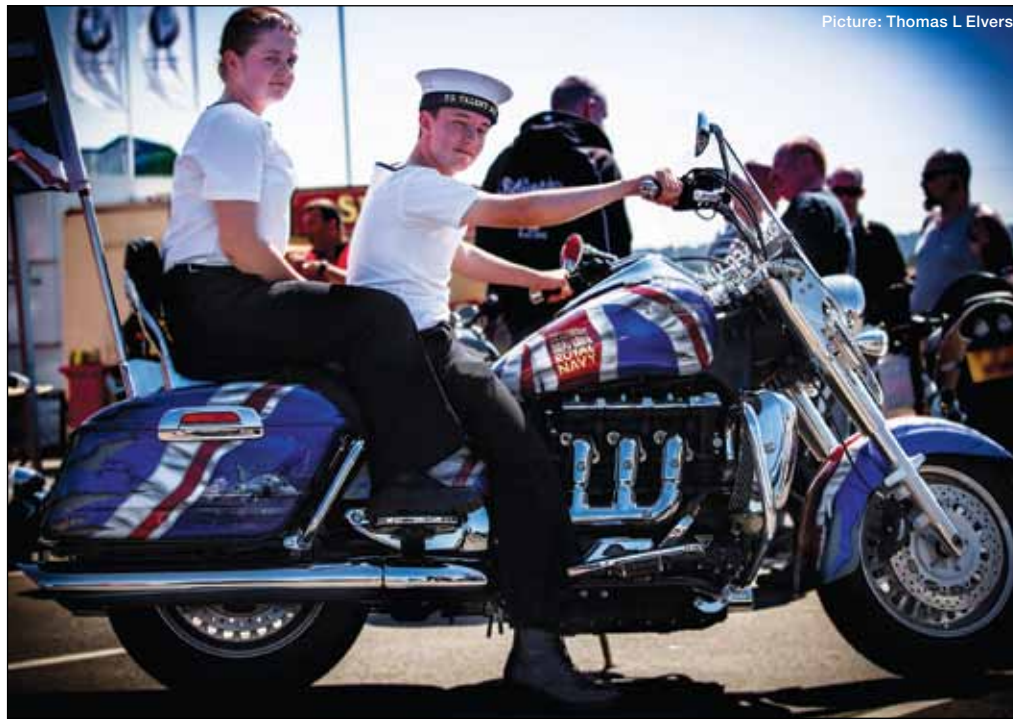
Capital scheme for leadership training

The Senior Cadet Leadership Course is based on an original concept by the leadership development team for **London Area Sea Cadets** and is designed and delivered in partnership with another uniformed youth organisation – the Volunteer Police Cadets.

Although still based on the programmes of the organisations involved, the course – held at the ACF Training Centre in Crowborough – embraces the idea that cadets are the next generation, and what they get from their cadet experience impacts on the wider community and their contribution to society at large.

The course looks at a variety of leadership theories and models and then puts them into practice through team and individual exercises.

The latest version also included a new session on personal branding and how the example they set influences those around them.



Picture: Thomas L Elvers

● **LC Stratford and AC Houlton, of Stoke on Trent unit, showing their support for the Ride Route 66 injured personnel charity. They are sitting on a Triumph Rocket 3 touring motorcycle painted in a colour scheme that includes a Union Jack and the badges of the three Armed Forces**

Sorting out the bikers

THE Staffordshire Motorbike Show is one of the biggest biker events in the area – and cadets from one of the local Sea Cadet units were invited to help out.

Stoke City's home ground, the Britannia Stadium, hosted the free event, which covered all aspects of motorbiking from the machines themselves to accessories, road safety and displays.

A wall of death attracted plenty of spectators, while professional BMX riders demonstrated their sport to the wider biker audience.

The Sea cadets and Royal Marines Cadets of **Stoke on Trent** unit were invited to help out in the car park – with a record 22,000 people attending, there were plenty of cars and motorbikes to direct.

Dunbar cadets rally to unit's new Colours

DUNBAR unit has been raising the standard – the Scottish unit organised a ceremony and parade to mark the inaugural dedication of their Colours.

The ceremony was held outside the unit HQ at TS Valiant, and the parade route took the cadets along the High Street.

Along with cadets and staff from Dunbar, Sea Cadets from **Musselburgh, Edinburgh (Trinity)** and **South Queensferry** units took part in the presentation, while the **Northern Area Sea Cadet Band**, with members from **Dundee, Arbroath, Stonehaven and Perth**, provided musical displays.

The assembled cadets were inspected by Rear Admiral Neil Rankin, the president of the unit, who then presented the Colours (pictured right).

Rear Admiral Rankin followed the presentation with a speech on the origins and development of the Sea Cadet organisation, and its role in providing positive foundations for young people.

Dunbar unit has grown from strength to strength in the past few years, having been on the verge of closure four years ago, and the Admiral gave due recognition to the roles in particular of PO (SCC) Michael Kaszuba, Officer in Charge of the unit, and Jim Dow, Chairman of the Unit Management Committee, for



their achievements in turning things around.

The colours were consecrated by Deaconess Sue Langdale.

Cadets then performed a march-past, accompanied by the band, with the salute being taken outside Dunbar Townhouse.

Guests, staff, friends and family enjoyed a reception in the Royal

For the first time, five cadet graduates from a previous course returned to support the trainers and their peers through the event.

The challenges of the weekend began on Friday night with teams being asked to consider inspirational leaders that have made an impact on them – maybe a historical figure, or someone from personal experience – and choose one to adopt as a team name.

Saturday included a whole-course task for the 40 cadets to organise and host a formal dinner with invited VIPs from the two organisations – Cdr Adrian Hanstock and Supt John Carroll from the Metropolitan Police joined **London Area Officer Cdr (SCC) John Greene (RNR)** and **Senior Staff Officer Cdr (SCC) Noel Wheatley RNR** in a carousel dinner being entertained entirely by the cadets, who also delivered some of the speeches.

Visiting stewards from **Tunbridge Wells** unit supported the event.

Sunday's programme included sessions on communication styles and processes, and an opportunity for the teams to present to a specially-invited panel of experts, which this time included the HQ Staff Officer Ceremonial Lt Cdr (SCC) John Vanns RNR, on a subject related to cadets and their experiences.

The course drew to a close with action planning and the presentation of certificates.

Both the participants and their units are encouraged to put what the cadets have learned into action after the course, and many have been involved in other projects in their organisation or in their community as well as supporting their home unit.

The next course will be delivered in January 2013 and will include a third cadet organisation from within London.

Enquiries about this course and the **London Leaders Development Scheme** can be sent to LondonLeaders@gmail.com

Quieter – but still very busy

AFTER a hectic June, it was almost inevitable that the pace would start to slacken for members of the **Northampton and Wellingborough** unit.

But the following weeks were only relatively quiet – there was still plenty for the cadets to get their teeth into.

Two main events loomed on the unit's calendar – the annual dragon boat race in the town, organised by the Rotary Club/Gable Events and the annual Area Combined Regatta held at Giron Sailing Club, near Newark.

The dragon boat race runs every year on the River Nene near Becker's Park, and the Sea Cadets play an important part in helping the event go smoothly.

On the Saturday before the event the unit clears the river of rubbish to create a clear pathway for the dragon boats.

The aim of the races is to raise money for the air ambulance – a very worthy cause, and one the cadets are happy to support.

For the racing itself, the unit created a team of ten cadets, some as young as ten years old, along with two members of staff.

They took to the water in the hope that at the very least they would be able to complete their races and not capsize the boat...

The races were timed events, with the fastest boats going forward to the finals.

The cadets competed in two races, competing fiercely and having a lot of fun – but there were no winners' medals to be had at the end, though the unit raised around £280 for charity.

Last year's regatta was staged in torrential rain, so it was only fair that this year the sun shone.

Representing **Northampton and Wellingborough** unit were: junior girls crew coxswain, OC Jade Rickard, open boys crew coxswain AC Bronach Wilson, open girls crew coxswain OC George Gibbs and two Yole crews: Senior crew, POC Joseph Barley and LC Olivia McQueen (senior), and AC Courtney Cox and Cdt Louis Jones (junior).

The unit also had two cadets in the paddle sport section – Cdt Josh Barritt and AC David Martin.

The competitors enjoyed a mixed day, starting with the open boys winning their first race and looking very strong contenders.

This all changed when the stroke became ill and the team had to be withdrawn.

However the junior girls (rockets) were next up, and after a close first race the girls soon got their rhythm winning all their races in their heat and then going through to the final.

With a place in the national finals in London at stake unit members lined the bank cheering the girls as they came home first.

The junior yole team also proved too good for the competition, and were due to join the girls at the National finals as *Navy News* went to press, as was David Martin who won his marathon paddle sport race.



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SEA CADETS



● SLt (SCC) Chris Healy RNR, CO of Gosforth unit, with the Olympic torch

Gosforth embraces Olympics

GOSFORTH cadets fully embraced the Olympic spirit during Britain's Summer of Sport.

Members of the North Eastern unit visited the Olympic Park in London earlier in the year for a behind-the-scenes tour, but as the Games got under way there were still plenty of chances for them to get involved.

Gosforth's Royal Naval Parade saw the visit of not only the Northern Area Officer – who recommended the unit for a burgee for 2012 – but also of an Olympic torch.

Cadets and adult volunteers took the opportunity to have their picture taken with the torch.

Next was the chance for senior cadets to see some Olympic football at St James' Park, home of Newcastle United.

POC Harper said: "It was a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I just feel overwhelmed to have been a part of it."

Perhaps the highlight of Gosforth's Olympic involvement came when ten cadets were given the chance to spend three days on board the Royal Navy flagship HMS Bulwark as she acted as command and control ship for the security operation during the Olympic sailing regatta at Weymouth.

AC James Robertson even met gold medallist Ben Ainslie on his shore-leave day.

Gosforth's CO, SLt (SCC) Chris Healy RNR, said: "We set out at the start of this year to give our cadets experiences which would stay with them for years to come."

"After our involvement at the Diamond Jubilee Pageant with a Trinity in the flotilla and cadets on the Royalist, the Olympics gave us another great chance to inspire our cadets – and I can safely say we have achieved our goal."

Captain's surprise

CAPTAIN Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor attended Hinckley unit's annual Royal Naval Inspection – and had a surprise in store for some of the officers and instructors.

Because unbeknownst to the recipients, Capt Windsor was there to present Diamond Jubilee Medals.

The officer also presented training qualifications to several cadets, and remained on board throughout the inspection to see cadets demonstrate their skills.

Also attending were the Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth, Cllr Martin Cartwright, representatives of other cadet forces and many parents and supporters.

At the end of the evening the unit was informed that their performance and training throughout the year had resulted in the awarding of an efficiency burgee, which puts it in the top 25 per cent of units across the country.

Qualifications all round at BRNC

CADETS from various organisations gathered at Britannia Royal Naval College for a training camp organised by the Royal Navy section of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

Around 150 youngsters, representing all three sections of the CCF as well as Sea Cadets, Volunteer cadets and Sea Scouts.

All received a civilian qualification of some kind, including National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, RYA powerboat, sailing and safety boat qualifications, diving and those of the Institute of Leadership and Management.

The CCF Band provided musical accompaniment on the parade ground and during the formal dinner, attended by cadets and staff.

Guest of honour was Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Charles Montgomery, who was also Inspecting Officer for Divisions.

He presented three CCF medals before the formal inspection, and spent time chatting to the cadets.



● Not very scary but you have to do it right – a cadet on a rope at BRNC

Picture: Nigel Huxtable

Jarrow rewarded for steady progress

JARROW unit have been presented with the Indefatigable Cup for 2012 in recognition of the unit's progress.

The presentation was just part of a busy evening, attended by a large number of special guests.

These included various civic dignitaries from South Tyneside, Northern Area Deputy Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Stewart RNR, Tyne South District Officer Lt Cdr Alfie Simpson RNR, Frank Major (representing the Lord Lieutenant), Vicky Willis from the Sir James Knott Trust, Vic

Spong, chairman of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets Tyne/Teesside branch and members of the Indefatigable Association.

There was also the usual impressive turnout of parents, friends and supporters.

The evening began with Colours, when Brig Bill O'Leary, chairman of the Indefatigable School Old Boys Association, and Frank Major inspected the ship's company, after which the cadets performed a presentation on the history of HMS Indefatigable.

SLt (SCC) Tracy Peel RNR, Officer in Charge of the unit, then accepted the cup from Brig O'Leary.

The cup is presented annually to the unit which has made

sustained progress throughout the year, with an effective training programme and successful participation in various District and Area events.

As the cup itself is so valuable it is held at Sea Cadet Headquarters, but the winning unit gets an engraved glass shield and a cheque for £1,000, which will help fund further cadet training.

Jarrow also received an efficiency burgee earlier in the year.

The Brigadier praised the unit for the incredible hard work that had been put in by cadets, staff and the unit management committee to save the unit from closure in 2011, and to increase cadet numbers to the current levels.

Reward for Maurice

MORE than 50 years of dedicated service to the Corps has been rewarded by the presentation of a special medal to an officer at Reading unit.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor visited the Berkshire unit to personally hand the long service medal to Lt Cdr (SCC) Maurice Alder RNR, who has been involved with Reading, man and boy, for 55 years.

The ceremony was attended by Area Officer Cdr Richard Tarr, MSSC Trustee Robert Woods, MSSC Chief Executive Martin Coles, local VIPs and members of the press.

Lt Cdr Alder joined the unit in 1950 as a cadet, and became a civilian instructor in 1957, after a short spell in the RAF.

Among his achievements were his shooting teams during the 1960s – Reading won the District title 12 years running, as well as the Inter-Services Cup and Nowell Cup on many occasions.

Lt Cdr Alder was also involved in raising considerable sums of money for King George's Fund for Sailors (now Seafarers UK), leading the organisation of cadets collecting in the town for this and local charity Alexandra Rose.

His stewardship of the unit wardroom bar from 1964-79 enabled the unit to sponsor a cadet on board TS Royalist, and even after retirement from the active list in 1983 he remained dedicated to the unit as First Lieutenant, and still coaches the .22 shooting team.



In the right circles

A PARTY of cadets from Merton unit enjoyed a voyage round the south-east of England on board their affiliated ship HMS Ocean.

The party embarked in the

Current training

MEMBERS of Sutton Valence School Combined Cadet Force visited HMS Collingwood to see how the Royal Navy undertakes electrical engineering training.

The cadets visited in two groups, escorted by one officer and three tutors, and were shown the facilities and training possibilities in Fisgard Building at the Maritime Warfare School.

They took the opportunity to conduct a practical electronic instruction where they made their own game boards under instruction from VT Group employees Jeff Champion and Malcolm Jordon.

Parade to mark burgee

ABINGDON unit organised a formal parade to mark the presentation of their Efficiency Burgee.

William Alden, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, joined other guests, parents and supporters to celebrate the unit's successes.

Every year, each unit in the Corps undergoes a process of monitoring known as the unit review, which examines all aspects of performance from compliance to various regulations, kit in stores, qualifications gained over the previous year and participation in courses and competition at District, Area and National level.

The results of this process highlight strengths within the unit but also point the way to further improvements.

The overall result of the review, expressed as a percentage score, may end with the unit being awarded one of two efficiency awards, a burgee for the top 25 per cent of units and a pennant for the next 50 per cent.

In 2011, Abingdon's review resulted in the award of an efficiency pennant – the first since 2006 – but they went one better this year, winning a burgee.

Unit CO Acting Lt (SCC) Kevin Anderson RNR said: "This is the first time the unit has achieved such an award since it was re-formed in 1993."

"It marks the effort and commitment of all involved in the activities of the unit as it has striven to build and advance itself over the past few years."

"This award has been earned by the work of the cadets in attending courses, gaining qualifications, representing the unit in competitions at District, Area and National level and the support that they are given by all our volunteer adult staff."

"I am proud of every member of Abingdon Sea Cadets."

After the formal presentation guests were entertained by the unit's volunteer band, who played a 20-minute routine before proceedings were brought to a close after the High Sheriff presented awards and badges to cadets as well as a Commendation from Captain Sea Cadets to CPO (SCC) Peter Young.

Chosen ones represent UK on Canada exchange

SIX cadets had the honour of representing the UK Sea Cadet Corps on a two week exchange to Canada.

The six, accompanied by an adult volunteer, were based at HCS Quadra, around 150 miles north of Victoria on Vancouver Island, off Canada's beautiful Pacific Coast.

A variety of activities were laid on for the visiting party, including on-the-job training and sightseeing.

They also took part in the traditional Canadian Ceremony of the Flags in Victoria, which saw hundreds of cadets take part in a show of precision and pageantry that was created in

1967 by the Royal Canadian Navy to celebrate the country's centennial.

Cdt Cpl Joe Sultana, POCs Megan Rowley, Jordan Griffiths and Harry Slade, and LCs Mikala Raines and Savanagh Figuiera were selected from more than 150 applicants, and were accompanied by Lt Cdr (SCC) Alan Thomas RNR (pictured above).

The UK is part of the International Sea Cadet Association (ISCA), along with 19 other countries who hold international exchange programmes every year.

For more details on opportunities to join an exchange, contact training@ms-sc.org

HMS Atomic Bomb

THIS month sees the 60th anniversary of Britain becoming a nuclear power with the successful explosion of its first nuclear weapon in the Montebello Islands off the coast of Australia.

The First Lieutenant of HMS Plym in 1952 was Lt Cdr Alan Tyler, who recounts his part in Operation Hurricane below.

At the foot of the page is a precis of a report carried in the January 1953 edition of *The Navy*, the 'official organ of the Navy League' which later merged with the Marine Society.

AS the Festival of Britain ended the previous autumn I was appointed First Lieutenant of the River-class frigate Plym, coming out of the Reserve Fleet at Chatham and undergoing conversion for a special mission.

The Commanding Officer, Engineer Officer and myself joining her had initially little more than a watching brief.

We had blueprints of her conversion, and it was obvious that the large space below decks forward marked 'WR' was not the Wardroom, but we didn't know quite what was planned for it and the purpose of the extra equipment being fitted.

We lived in Chatham Barracks that winter, planning for the commissioning and writing the ship's orders.

We were shocked by the sudden death of the King on February 6 1952, and commissioned less than two weeks later with His altered to Her manually in our commissioning warrant as one of the first ships in Her Majesty's Navy since Queen Victoria died.

The ship's company promptly marched back to barracks as the ship was still unfit to live in, until finally early in March we moved on board, easing out the last of the dockyard workmen.

We steamed down the Medway to Sheerness, from where we carried out sea trials, painted ship and sorted ourselves out.

After work-up and Easter leave we kept receiving a stream of scientists checking that all was prepared and finally, one morning in May, a lighter came alongside in Sheerness.

We opened the forward hatch leading down into the Weapon Room and with one red and one green flag for stop and go I carefully hoisted Britain's first nuclear weapon out of the lighter with our specially-mounted derrick.

We lowered it gently down into its housing where it was firmly secured.

Various scientists were in attendance, but the actual transfer was no more dramatic or complicated than loading a crate of food.

In our ignorance we assumed that it was primed, so grasped the steadying lines firmly, but in fact the worst we could have done was to dent the outer casing.

All we ever saw was the casing of the bomb, which looked like a huge steel egg.

It was solemnly inspected at regular intervals to check that all was in order.

We assumed that the scientists who did so knew what to do if it was not, and hoped that by then it would not be a bit late to take action.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill had announced that the test of the United Kingdom atomic weapon would be carried out off the Australian coast with their cooperation.

He also gave details of the ships involved, led by the escort carrier HMS Campania under Rear Admiral Arthur Torlesse, and we finally sailed on June 11 in company with Campania.

It was intended to suggest that we were escorting the ship carrying the weapon, in case there was any attempt at sabotage.

Calling in at Gibraltar, Freetown, Simon's Town and Mauritius, we reached Fremantle in Western Australia at the end of July for a few days break before sailing on to the Montebello Islands some 800 miles to the north.

They formed a central lagoon in which we secured with strong cables laid by the advance party of Landing Ships Tank.

The islands had been discovered by the French and named after one of Napoleon's marshals, but did not live up to their name.

They were neither mountains nor beautiful, but low and rocky islands covered with scrub and creeper and uninhabited except for lizards, turtles and the descendants of cat and rat survivors of shipwrecks.

They lay about 80 miles from



● HMS Plym, destroyed in the Montebello atomic test explosion (below, as seen from a distance of more than 50 miles)

Pictures: The Navy

the mainland township of Onslow, from whose airstrip our mail was flown to us.

Campania carried one of the first Naval helicopter squadrons, whose aircraft were ideal for mail delivery but also for moving the scientists and work parties quickly about the islands to erect their observations and other equipment.

We were busy for several weeks offloading scientific material, destoring the ship and carrying out all the work required by the scientists.

A beer canteen had been set up on the main Hermite Island, there was swimming over the side and sunbathing, but few other amenities except for film shows, so the stay soon began to pall.

The ship's company had been allowed to believe that the bomb would be unloaded at Montebello, but it soon became very clear that it was to be exploded aboard, hence the destoring and stripping the ship of its moveable contents.

All First Lieutenants had Permanent Loan Lists of items which all too easily got lost but had to be accounted for.

I was to blow mine up, so there was very rapidly a stream of visitors anxious to acquire anything from the wooden gratings over our bollards to pieces of surplus cable gear which we happily dispensed.

The ship's company began to be thinned out with transfers to Campania, and was reduced to a 'care and maintenance' team by

early September.

The officers were reduced to the Captain, Engineer and myself, taking Duty Officer in turn, with 25 left of the ship's company to service the seven scientists who were now living aboard and involved in final preparations.

Saturday September 20 was the dress rehearsal, with everyone evacuated but I, left on board alone to raise the alarm if anything suddenly went wrong.

It happened to be the Jewish New Year, so I spent my most unusual one reading the prayers to myself on the deck of a floating bomb.

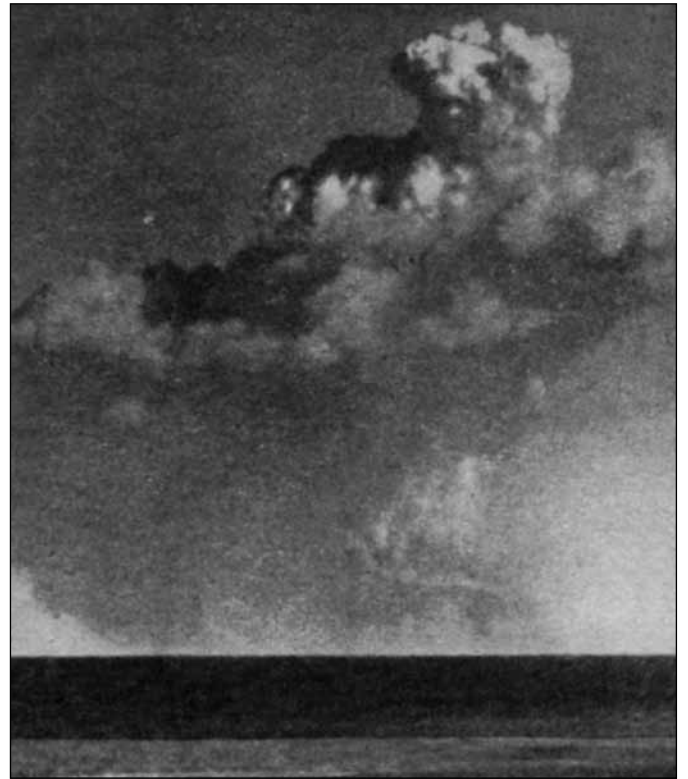
All the other ships left the lagoon the following week in advance of the explosion, and Dr William Penney, of the Ministry of Supply, who had directed the whole production work, flew in from Perth with the priming device in his baggage.

A delightful, unassuming man, he was rightly knighted following the successful explosion and, as Lord Penney, joined a Plym reunion more than 30 years later.

He came aboard to make the necessary adjustments, and D-1 was declared for October 2.

We last few left that night for Campania, and Plym was atomised by the first British nuclear weapon at 0930 local time the following morning.

All the task force gathered on the decks of their ships with their backs to the lagoon and



their eyes shut against the flash, then after a safety pause we were allowed to turn round and see the mushroom cloud spiralling up over the lagoon.

Dr Penney had been an observer at Bikini for the American explosions and seen how their expensive measuring devices had been destroyed by the blast, so he based his observations on strategically-placed empty oil drums which gave most effective blast records.

We had all been issued with radiation measuring discs to wear round our necks before we left England, and these were checked regularly to ensure we were not exposed to excessive radiation.

Only specially-protected personnel were landed on the islands after the explosion to assess the damage.

Dr Penney had come out with a collection of arming keys, similar to the one with which he primed the bomb, which he presented to a number of us, and mine is one of my more unusual souvenirs.

We also had a number of porthole wingnuts from Plym engraved as mementos, and an artist in Campania decorated the inside of scallop shells, which were plentiful on the beaches, with paintings of the nuclear cloud, and these sold in scores as they came off the production line on the voyage home.

We ex-Plyms all took passage home in Campania, after a break in Fremantle for everyone as a reward for many weeks of isolation at Montebello.

We sailed direct to Aden and stopping only at Gibraltar to reach Portsmouth in time for Christmas and overseas leave before dispersal to new appointments.

One of the Navy's hazards was that one rarely served again with former shipmates, but when old Plyms ever meet up we recall the unusual events of our short but unique commission.

✎ This account was adapted by the author from his book *Cheerful and Contented*, published by the Book Guild in February 2000, ISBN number 1857764234.

Royal Navy at the heart of weapon test

THE security blanket covering preparations for the first British atomic test also shrouded the Royal Navy's role in Operation Hurricane, according to 'Pelorus' of *The Navy*.

"Journalists saw a peculiar Z-shaped atomic cloud and felt a shock wave on the Australian mainland 55 miles away, but the world waited three weeks for the first official details of 'the historic episode,' as Mr Churchill called it," reported the correspondent.

"Then the tremendous significance of the scientific achievement overshadowed the important part the Navy had played in making the test possible.

"This article attempts to bring the Naval aspect of the test into proper focus."

Pelorus's article reports that the Prime Minister had told the House of Commons that the object of the test was to investigate the effects of an atomic explosion in a harbour, and the fact that the explosion had vaporised HMS Plym indicated the central role the Royal Navy had played.

Naval preparations had begun some two years before when Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Admiral Edward Evans-Lombe was asked to plan an expedition, with Rear Admiral Arthur Torlesse in command.

A committee of representatives from all Government departments involved was also set up.

The Navy was responsible for transport, housing and logistical support, requiring a base ship and other vessels.



HMS Campania, used as a mobile exhibition for the Festival of Britain, was to be the base ship, supported by three LSTs, HM Ships Zeebrugge, Narvik and Tracker – complete with 17 landing craft – and HMS Plym.

Nearly all ships had to be converted for their special task – in the case of Campania, wardroom and cabin accommodation had to be doubled to house Ministry of Supply personnel, who outnumbered Naval officers by four to one, while the LSTs were altered to carry some 200 Royal Engineers, building plant, material and stores.

Zeebrugge and Narvik arrived in Montebello at the end of April 1952 as an advanced party, while

Rear Admiral Torlesse hoisted his flag in Campania as Flag Officer Special Squadron on May 14 in Chatham.

Tracker sailed independently in early June via Suez, followed less than a week later by Campania and Plym, taking a route via the Cape.

Arriving in the test area on August 8, the British sailors found an archipelago of around 100 islands, flanked to the west by a coral reef, and the nearest mainland port was the tiny settlement of Onslow, a town of 400 souls 90 miles away.

Although Onslow had an airstrip, there was little else, and all provisions had to come from Fremantle, 800 miles south as the

crow flies.

Australian ships, including carrier HMAS Sydney and escorts Hawkesbury, Tobruk, Shoalhaven, Culgoa, Murchison and Macquarie, patrolled the test area.

Building material was put ashore on various islands by landing craft and building work quickly began, and despite almost constant use over five months in shallow, rocky and rough seas, 15 of the landing craft were still available for use on the day of the test – a tribute to both the design of the craft and their Royal Marines crews.

Some staff and Royal Engineers lived ashore in tents, many more were accommodated on the troop decks of the landing ships.

And although the pace was relentless, there was still time for sports and recreation, including hockey and seven-a-side football.

There was plenty of scope for net and line fishing, and an area of beach was netted off for bathing.

Adjacent islands were visited for picnics, and cinemas rigged up in ships.

After weeks of hard work, and some delays because of bad weather, the big day dawned with an air of great expectancy.

Ships were withdrawn, and personnel not on watch who wished to witness the explosion were told to face away to prevent possible injury to their eyes.

A running commentary was played over the ships' loudspeakers.

The device was detonated

around 2.7 metres below the waterline, with Plym anchored in 12m of water.

The flash was so intense it could be seen all round the horizon, and after a few seconds the order was given: "You may look now."

According to Pelorus: "An awesome sight met everyone's gaze.

"A great greyish black cloud was being hurled thousands of feet into the air, increasing in size with great rapidity.

"A very loud explosion was heard, not unlike the firing of a gun, and this was followed by a second bang.

"At the same time there was a noticeable shock wave, in effect not unlike the sensation experienced in one's ears in an aircraft when losing height.

"The cloud grew bigger and higher, assuming fantastic shapes as it was dispersed by strong and varied winds at different altitudes.

"Thousands of tons of water, mud and rock were thrown into the air and a high tidal wave was caused as the effects of blast and radioactive contamination spread over a wide area."

Soon after the explosion two Naval officers, Lt Cdr Denis Stanley and Senior Commissioned Observer Lambert flew helicopters over the heavily-contaminated lagoon where Plymouth had lain to take water samples.

Scientists and Servicemen in protective clothing later entered the area around the lagoon to examine the effects of the blast and recover records.



● RM, meet PM... Chris poses with the premier and (below) the GB ladies' handball team – all willing to show their support for Cash for Commandos



Livin' the dream...

MEET my new mate David...

Yes that really is the premier. Wearing a 'Cash for Commandos' wristband (in trademark Royal Marines livery).

True to his word "to 'big up' the Royal Marines and Royal Navy" at every opportunity, judoka Mne Chris Sherrington made sure few athletes or visitors to the Olympic Park left without a new fashion accessory.

The Queen's granddaughter (and eventing silver medalist) Zara Phillips, Team GB gold medal boxer Anthony Joshua and even the Prime Minister David Cameron have all been collared by the larger-than-life Marine, happily putting on their Cash for Commandos wristbands and posing for the camera.

The charity, founded in 2010, aims to help serving or ex-serving commandos who have been injured while on active duties for their country – true to the motto: once a marine, always a marine.

As one of the charity's many supporters, Chris, 28, took several boxes of wristbands to the Olympic village to help raise awareness of their cause.

"I only took about 20 wristbands at first," said Chris, but then began taking boxes as they were so popular. I came up with the idea of getting famous athletes in the village

to wear the bands and we took photos of them with them on.

"I was asked if I wanted lunch with David Cameron which was nice – so then when I was there I asked him if he supported the Royal Marines. When he said he did I took out the wristband and said 'prove it'. He laughed and said he was more than happy to wear it and pose for a photo."

Chris competed in his first Olympics – getting through to his second bout of the men's judo +100kg category after beating Australian Jake Andrewartha in the first round.

Despite a valiant effort the Royal Marine of 45 Commando bowed out in the second following a tussle with three-times world gold medalist Alexander Mikhaylin of Russia.

That defeat has left him hankering for another crack at the Olympic title in Rio – but overall, he's loved every minute of his London 2012 adventure, acknowledging the support of the public at the victory parade through the streets of the capital. They couldn't hear him – so luckily he had a fall-back plan: a big thank-you sign.

You can flick through scores of images from Chris' Olympic escapades at the Royal Navy's Facebook site, www.facebook.com/royalnavy



REVIEW

Playing up the American role

IT OFTEN seems that the US Navy (and Marine Corps) fought World War 2 against Japan and the US Army (and Army Air Forces) fought Germany and Italy.

Army forces were, however, employed against Japan (not least the nuclear bombers) and the US Navy played a significant role in Europe.

The latter story has now been ably told in *The US Navy and the War in Europe* (Seaforth, £35 ISBN 978-1-84832-082-6) by Robert Stern, an experienced American naval author whose excellent book on kamikazes I favourably reviewed in these pages, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

One irony of the US Navy's contribution to the war in Europe was that perhaps its most important work was done before Pearl Harbor.

The author is very good in the

way he explains the slow escalation of America's conflict with Germany. The autumn of 1941 saw American destroyers escorting convoys and the Denmark Strait being covered by US capital ships when a breakout with German heavy surface ships was threatened in November 1941.

This American activity was crucial to the effective victory in the 'Battle of the Atlantic', as declared by Churchill in early 1941. By the end of the year, both the U-boat and surface threats had been effectively neutralised.

The paradox of the official entry of the United States into the war was the highly productive U-boat offensive against shipping off the American coast.

Convoys got through unscathed, as German submarines concentrated on undefended individual ships, often clearly visible against coastal towns whose authorities dragged their feet against the imposition of a wartime blackout.

Stern loyally defends Admiral King, the American naval chief, in his refusal to introduce convoys because of his shortage of potential escorts.

He might have made more of the doctrinal difference between the Americans and the British; the former saw convoys as bait to attract raiders to their destruction, which was impossible without sufficient escorts. The latter saw the "safe and timely arrival" of the ships as the priority.

This was not the Americans' view with millions of tons of shipbuilding capacity coming on stream. Any ships sunk would be soon replaced – and the new ships would probably fly the stars and stripes rather than the red ensign.

This may not have been in the forefront of King's mind, but it is hard to accept it was not a factor, especially for an officer brought up in the pre war US Navy tradition of Anglophobia.

One interesting aspect of Anglo-American cooperation to



● The death of U175 in April 1943 at the hands of depth charges from US Coast Guard cutter Spencer.

Picture: US National Archives

THE GROVE REVIEW

emerge is the use of American assets to reinforce the Home Fleet when British units were called upon elsewhere.

When forces were sent preemptively to occupy Diego Suarez and Madagascar in March 1942, Task Force 39 – made up of the new battleship Washington, the carrier Wasp, two heavy cruisers and eight destroyers – was sent to Scapa Flow.

The deployment started badly when the TF commander, Rear Admiral Wilcox, was washed over the side in heavy weather.

Rather against Roosevelt's better

judgement, Churchill managed to get Wasp used to reinforce Malta with Spitfire fighters before the carrier was sent to the Pacific to replace losses there.

The other American ships worked with the Home Fleet to cover convoys to Russia, including the ill-fated PQ17.

There might have been a little more discussion of this episode, as it has been suggested that the level of reinforcement implies the use of the convoy as bait to draw out the German surface battle group.

It all went dreadfully wrong and an angry Admiral King withdrew

his battleship to the Pacific.

British sources have tended to neglect the American part of Operation Torch, the invasion of French North Africa, notably the considerable Battle of Casablanca.

A major participant was the rather flawed carrier USS Ranger which the Americans considered unsuitable for the 'Premier League' in the Pacific.

It was now the turn of the new battleship Massachusetts (now preserved) accompanied by four cruisers. The opposition was the incomplete, but still dangerous, battleship Jean Bart, the cruiser Primauguet and the 2nd Light Squadron made up of three powerful super-destroyers and five smaller destroyers.

The light squadron was destroyed, the cruiser terminally damaged and the battleship neutralised by bombing after a battleship v battleship duel, whose scars the American battleship still bears.

The overall American contribution to operations in the Mediterranean may come as a surprise to many, but it was significant, culminating in actions against former Italian warships commandeered by the Germans.

The author might have made more of the diversionary effect of the Sicily landings in causing Hitler to call off the Kursk offensive, but of significance is his account of the other diversionary operations off Norway at this time, carried out by a powerful Anglo-American concentration composed of the battleships South Dakota, Alabama, Duke of York and Anson and the carriers Furious, Illustrious, Unicorn and Ranger.

A possible invasion of Norway was simulated, another example of the importance of western sea power in diverting the Germans during the summer of 1943. Ranger was used again for a raid in the Bodo area in October – similar to the 1980s exercises which many readers will remember.

The American contribution to the Normandy landings is rather under-stated, perhaps because of the fact that it still comes a little hard for an American to admit that Operation Neptune was a British-led event.

The description of the problems with the rehearsals is rather garbled and inadequate and, oddly, the tremendous contribution of the American destroyers in preventing Omaha being a fiasco, so well described in the American official history – a source well trawled by the author elsewhere – is ignored.

Otherwise, the book is well researched, clearly written and beautifully produced with new pictures that really do enhance the text. I have seen few better in this regard. I doubt if any reader, British or American, will not gain a great deal from reading it. It is highly recommended.

"Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind"
Ref: NN

AUTHORS

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● Double gold medal winner Lt Pete Reed holds a Q&A session at Southampton Boat Show, accompanied by Sub Lt Tom Lennon of the RN's Directorate Media Communications

Intent on thwarting any Aussie rule

WHILE Royal Marine Chris Sherrington was spreading the commando message to all and sundry...

...double Olympic gold medal-winning **rower** and Royal Navy lieutenant Pete Reed took time out from his hectic training schedule to speak at several events during Europe's biggest boat show in Southampton.

The elite athlete gave a 25-minute presentation on stage at the show in a Q&A session about the start of his Navy and subsequent rowing career and also presented awards to apprentices in the yachting industry.

The 31-year-old was part of Team GB's coxless men's heavyweight four who rowed to victory over their rivals the Australians in a nail biting final in August.

He already had a gold medal from the 2008 games in Beijing, and is hoping to follow that up with a third victory in Rio in 2016.

"Winning the gold medal was the most amazing feeling – it was the fear of losing that kept me going the whole time – I absolutely did not want to be beaten by the Australians," said Pete.

"They talked a very good talk and there was a lot in the media beforehand about them saying how they would beat us in the final, but we kept our heads down and just completely focused on what we wanted to achieve – and it was well worth it.

"The support from the Royal Navy, from my family, friends and fiancée has just been amazing – I realise I am away from all of them for a lot of time to achieve these goals but I know they will all always be there for me at the end of the day."

As well as presenting awards and giving speeches, Pete also took time to chat to members of the public about his Olympic experiences and visited the Royal Marines on their Offshore Raiding Craft, which was appearing at the show as well as a Mk8 Lynx, laying on 'dynamic displays' for some of the 125,000+ visitors.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan, FRPU East



Helping troops get back on track

JUST days after the Paralympics enthralled the world courtesy of the spirit and sporting prowess of athletes with disabilities, the UK's first injured serviceman's **motorcycle** team took part in its first race meeting.

L/Cpl Murray Hambro of 2nd Royal Tank Regiment (2RTR) competed at the Castle Combe circuit in Wiltshire on a specially-adapted Triumph Daytona 675R bike – despite losing both legs in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2010.

The soldier was riding for True Heroes Racing, set up by CPO Phil Spencer of 848 Naval Air Squadron after meeting injured servicemen and women at charity events he'd organised in conjunction with UK military charity Afghan Heroes.

"This is an extraordinary achievement as Murray is a double amputee who only completed his medical rehabilitation programme at Headley Court a few months ago," said a delighted Phil after his colleague's debut.

"Having met so many amazing and inspirational people through my association with Afghan Heroes, I wanted to be able to offer these guys who'd suffered some appalling injuries a new focus and sense of direction once they'd reached the end of their medical rehabilitation journey."

The team is run by a mix of injured and able-bodied UK Service personnel.

Murray was supported in his first race by fellow 2RTR veteran Cpl Graeme Billington, who was injured when the Warthog he was commanding struck a mine in Afghanistan in January last year; the blast left him wheelchair bound and has little or no use of his right arm and hand. Helping Graeme out was LH Adam Shroff of 771 Naval Air Squadron.

Supported by Aero Tec Laboratories, who provide safety fuel tanks to the military and motorsport world, the team's plan is to take part in the 2013 Triumph Triple Challenge – one of the main support races at the British Superbike Championships.

Before then True Heroes Racing are back on the race track at Thruxton on October 6; Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire, October 13-14; Mallory Park in Leicestershire October 19-21; and Cadwell Park again on October 27-28.

"True Heroes Racing is not all about the rider, but the team ethos as well," said Phil.

"To compete at the highest level possible is a real challenge, but gives Service personnel something they can get their teeth into.

"To do it on two wheels



● (l-r) Cpl Graeme Billington (2RTR), LH Adam Shroff (771 NAS), L/Cpl Murray Hambro (2RTR) and team boss CPO Phil Spencer (848 NAS) in the pits at Castle Combe

Pictures: Wayne King

provides specific challenges, but shows the world that these guys can achieve anything that their able bodied counterparts can do.

"Motorsport is a fast, frenetic and pressurised environment – not too dissimilar to the battlefield. It is also a world many Service personnel would not have considered open to them even when they were fully able bodied."

You can follow the team's progress on Facebook at True Heroes Racing and you can get involved by contacting Phil at phil.spencer@trueheroesracing.co.uk.

■ THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Motorsport Association (RNRMMSA) is recruiting for the 2013 season – but there's still an opportunity to get involved during the remainder of 2012.

This season has been very successful for the association and it's looking to build on this year's achievements in the coming 12 months by developing grassroots events, more Inter-Service races and a return to international-level racing, writes PO Dutchy Holland.

The association supports all areas of motorsport – two and four-wheel racing. This season disciplines have included rallying, sprints, hill climbs, stock car, karting, circuit racing on four wheels and road racing, motocross and enduros on two wheels.

The goal for 2013 is to forge a car-racing team. A series of grassroots 'taster' events will be held where potential racers can drive a race-prepared sports car. Additionally, the association is looking for more racers to compete in sprint events as an introduction to motorsport. Such races are very cost effective – it's possible to compete in a road-going vehicle.

With the much-anticipated arrival of the Team Navy endurance karts, now is the perfect time to get involved in a grassroots

event and represent the Service at the Inter-Service karting championships as well as selected rounds of the European Prokart Endurance Championship.

For anyone owning or aspiring to own their own kart, the team will be competing in various club-level events over the winter in preparation for next season.

This year saw the RNRMMSA lead the formation of the Inter-Service Road Race Championship. The series has been a major success with some excellent television coverage for all the riders.

Team Navy has been built over the season and has introduced many riders to their first taste of competitive motorsport at some of the UK's best tracks.

Sadly losing to the other Services in 2012, the team are looking to develop existing riders and novices and claim victory in 2013. Plans are also under way to support and develop the RNRMMSA's other teams in 2013, especially motocross and Enduro riding.

The association includes race marshals, mechanics, photographers and spectators who attend events across Europe; the association photographer is a familiar face in the British Superbike paddock and also at other major events including the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

All events are open to the public and spectators are encouraged to come and support us. We would particularly welcome spectators at the Jamie Adam Memorial Road Race meeting held at Thruxton on October 6 – the event is in memory of one of the leading lights of RN motorsport who was killed in a bike crash on the Isle of Man in 2010.

More details about RN motorsport can be found on Facebook under RNRMMSA or you can visit www.pdevportal.co.uk/sports/motorsport.



Wight knights

Continued from page 44

Those who did make it would race on to the finish line back at Gilkicker.

Raleigh's Sea Shanty struggled to pass Cowes in light winds and against the tide, so it decided to abandon the challenge and motor to Yarmouth to allow their runner to compete in the land section.

In fact with the winds refusing to play the game the race director decreed that all yachts would move to motor power and head for Yarmouth at a speed of 5kts to give their runners the chance to compete.

It was also decided that yachts could undertake the second leg back to Bembridge under power or sail to make the tidal cut-off time, but the final leg back to Gilkicker was still to be conducted under sail.

The heroes who would be undertaking the 25 miles and 1600ft of ascent were: Lt Cdr Gordon King (Vintage MESMs) – pictured above in one of the island's leafy lanes – CPO Ian Frith (Collingwood), WO Andy Marshall (Sultan) and Sgt Richard Hall (Raleigh).

The terrain ahead for the runners covered pathways, tracks and occasionally public roads, was undulating with some steep climbs and descents. On a trial event the running route took over four and a half hours for a team of fit runners.

At 2.09pm Happy Apple arrived at Yarmouth to drop off her runner (Lt Cdr King) and cyclist with Electron V runner (CPO Ian Frith) 11 minutes behind.

The runners made their way through seven check points and, although out of the overall race, Raleigh could still take the cross-island trophy... which they did.

Despite a navigational error, Raleigh's Sgt Hall posted the best time to Bembridge (3h 53m), followed by Lt Cdr King (4h 21m) and CPO Frith (4h 28m) with WO1 Marshall reaching the finishing line bang on 7pm – just in time to beat the tidal cut-off – in 3h 59m.

There was drama at the end. While Happy Apple and the Vintage MESMs were sailing towards Gilkicker and victory, Head over Heels decided to motor home having realised that completion by 9pm was not possible under sail.

At that point her engine overheated and spluttered to a stop leaving her drifting with the tide in light winds. Gallantly, Electron V, with her crew of warfare and weapons engineers went to rescue the drifting marine engineers and took her in tow.

Happy Apple sailed on to cross the finishing line at 8.26pm, completing the challenge in an overall time of 11h 26m and 49s to lift both the Commodore's Cup for fastest unadjusted time and, more importantly, the Strudyna Trophy for fastest adjusted time based on the yacht's handicap rating (the Vintage MESMs had a combined age of 266 years and total of 180 years service between them).

Collingwood came second, Sultan third with Raleigh bringing up the rear although they did take the cross-island honours.

It was an eventful first running of the Solent Amphibious Challenge, although due to the light winds no-one completed the full event without use of their engines.

Anyone interested in having a go at the challenge should visit sac2012blog.wordpress.com where details of rules and regulations and how to undertake a crack at the title can be found, along with up-to-date records.



Medics show Real head for heights

STUNNING image, but would you mind climbing up there again with the Ensign the other way around?

Five thousand and 495 metres (18,028ft) above sea level, a team of naval medics stand proudly at the summit of Pata Patani, one of numerous peaks rising more than 5,000 metres in the Cordillera Real – the Bolivian Andes.

More than 50 mountaineers and explorers, drawn from all three Services, headed to South America to take part in the Defence Medical Services expedition Northern Bolivian Venture, writes Surg Sub Lt Will Smith.

The expedition had three aims: to climb at high altitude, to carry out medical research and to encourage the uptake of adventurous training by Forces medics and surgeons.

About half of the three-week expedition was devoted to acclimatising (La Paz airport is at 4,000m) and perform research on the participants during this process.

Information collected during the research will add to the data already gathered on three previous expeditions to the Americas to investigate the effects of altitude on certain enzymes in the body, and whether it's related to altitude sickness levels.

The hope is that this will help intensive care doctors understand more about how the body adapts to critical illnesses and stressful situations.

The expedition was focused on mountains three hours north-west of La Paz. Split into two teams, participants had the same itinerary: five days around La Paz with a brief visit to Copacabana on Lake Titicaca, followed by six days trekking up to base camp, before moving to a high camp at 5,200m from where the climbing started.

At three points (Copacabana, the end of the road to the mountains and high camp) blood tests, saliva samples, monitoring and a heart scan were performed on an exercise day and the following rest day. These tests were taken in conjunction with a 'symptoms diary' each participant filled in every day up to high camp.

With the research reaching its climax at high camp, the teams were left with six days to tackle the stunning and imposing mountains around the base and high camps.

The two main objective peaks were Pata



● One of the team struggles to clamber out of a crevasse on a glacier leading to Chachocomani

Patani and Chachocomani (6,074m). Pata Patani was a stunning ridge walk with scrambles and sheer edges to a highly-rewarding summit.

As far as we could ascertain from talking to the local guides this was the first time this last ridge of the mountain had been ascended.

Views over Lake Titicaca on one side were contrasted with the breathtaking snow-capped Andes on the other. On the third ascent of the ridge the 'summiteers' were granted a rare view of an Andean condor circling overhead.

Chachocomani was attempted from the high camp over a crevasse-littered glacier – one crevasse claimed one member of Team 2 up to her waist – up a shoulder on to a precarious snow ridge to the summit.

It was a gruelling climb starting at around 2am and lasting between eight and 12 hours, depending on snow conditions and ascent route.

Team 1 forced a track towards the summit of Chachocomani, a mountain which had only been climbed from this side by a handful of local guides.

The initial summit bid saw four team members reach the top, while bitter cold forced the remainder to turn around to avoid the risk of cold injury.

After success for all Team 1 on Pata Patani and the one attempt at Chachocomani the weather turned with three days of snow and wind effectively ending the team's climbing.

The two-team approach favoured the second team who took full advantage of hard-won local knowledge and settled weather to complete both objectives within four days, leaving the more experienced and enthusiastic members to tackle other peaks, some of which were unclimbed and unnamed.

One group climbed an unnamed mountain – now retitled 'Jubilee Peak' – which involved six hours scrambling to the summit at 5,100m.

Another group had an epic encounter trying to climb another unnamed peak across the valley from base camp.

The estimated hour and a half moraine field quickly turned into three. After starting the steep ascent up the snow field and nearing the summit, the ice and snow conditions deteriorated and started sounding hollow.

The avalanche risk was so great that they opted to turn back while they still could and returned well after dark (5.30pm) after negotiating the moraine field again and re-ascending up to base camp, looking exhausted but with some great stories and stunning photographs.

Once the climbing was over, the teams returned to La Paz for a much-needed shower and some R&R before the long flight home.

R&R took the form of cycling down 'the world's most dangerous road' – a fantastic day with terrifying drops and lush tropical rain forest. It was a real contrast to the barren valleys of base camp and a lovely change to not be struggling for breath at the end (the road descended from 4,200m to 1,100m).

The expedition was a huge success and hopefully the information gained from the research will improve our understanding of, and possibly help to predict and treat acute mountain sickness. It also allowed the participants to push themselves physically and mentally as well as gain new skills in mountaineering and trekking in high alpine conditions.



Para-dise in Wales

THIS is what is known in the business as a 'me shot'.

Several hundred feet above Chepstow race course, Lt Alistair Andrews takes 'one for the album' with fellow paraglider Lt Dan Starsmore behind him as they help the Forces to their first victory in the British Club Challenge.

After years of individual Service teams entering the series of races over central and southern Wales – spread from April to September – this year the Army, Navy and RAF decided to pool resources to form a Combined Services team.

It worked.

The event is a cross-country competition; pilots take off from a hill and fly as far as they can, choosing the correct air to circle and climb in, before deciding when it's time to race, writes Lt Andrews.

Sometimes the air can be moving up at 30mph and the fabric wings are thrown around like rag dolls.

In one round, the CS team flew at more than 6,500ft over mid-Wales in snow and -15°C at cloud base, in challenging and turbulent air.

Flt Lt Oliver Fisher and Lt Andrews pushed on to fly to the edge of Cardiff airport's airspace for 66km while many other pilots landed in the cold and rough conditions for single digit scores.

In another round Lts Starsmore and Andrews flew to Chepstow

from Builth Wells, some 75km which took four hours. This was a personal best flight for Dan and lead to the military convincingly winning the round.

WO2 Paul Pingham and Maj Alex Beart also set personal bests, while in the July round LAC Tom Garner flew 38km under leaden skies while most other pilots flew fewer than ten.

This put the hatchet into the civilian clubs, giving the Combined Services a huge lead going into the final at the start of September. Sadly the weather was not as good as forecast that weekend, but three wins from four successful rounds meant the CS were decisive winners.

Prize-giving took place at the Old Rectory, Llangattock, where tankards and prizes were awarded by organisers.

It truly was a team performance in all respects. In every round someone performed for the team – all importantly, just when it mattered.

The team consisted of more than ten pilots, with a good mix from all three Services. Six pilots flew in each round, many giving up several weekends to compete and sometimes making the long journey to Wales only to be let down by the weather.

All that effort paid off, with some great memories of a successful season, despite the poor weather from May onwards.

Wight knights

AFTER a four-and-a-half-hour slog across the Isle of Wight, the pain is etched on the face of CPO Ian Frith.

And still the inaugural Solent Amphibious Challenge – a combination of sailing, running/orienteering and cycling – wasn't over.

The one-day multi-event race by land and sea, organised by HMS Collingwood was open to Service teams from across the Forces – although as it was all participants were RN or ex-RN.

Four teams – one from Collingwood in Electron V, HMS Sultan in Head over Heels, HMS Raleigh in Sea Shanty and a team called the Vintage MESMs in Happy Apple – began the race at 9am on a calm, windless morning off Gilkicker Point in Gosport.

The yachts were required to sail west to Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, where a runner and support cyclist would be landed to commence a run along a prescribed route of approximately 25 miles from west to east.

The route would include climbing 1,600ft, taking in the stunning scenery of the Tennyson and Worsley trails before finishing at Bembridge Harbour at the other end of the island.

The rest of the team would sail as quickly as possible to Bembridge where they would rendezvous with the running team. Should the runner fail to make it to Bembridge by 7pm then the whole team would be retired from the race (due to the tidal window).

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